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27 MAY 2021

MONACO MAGIC FOR MAX

**How Verstappen took the
F1 title lead and why
Lewis had a nightmare**

**'We can't afford
another weekend
like this'**

LEWIS HAMILTON

PLUS

- Dixon snatches Indy 500 pole
- Evans storms to Rally Portugal win
- The Brit waiting for his Ferrari F1 chance

F1 2021

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Verstappen moves
ahead for the
first time





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Verstappen moves ahead as Leclerc misses his home chance

The 2021 Monaco Grand Prix will not be remembered as a classic, but it was what the Formula 1 title battle needed. Max Verstappen's win, combined with a dire weekend for Mercedes, has put the 23-year-old into the championship lead for the first time. And Red Bull now tops the constructors' contest by a single point.

As Alex Kalinauckas shows in our report on page 18, there were several reasons why the race last weekend didn't quite have the fizz we had hoped for. Perhaps the biggest was that poor Charles Leclerc did not get to start from a surprise pole position for Ferrari (p17). Forty years since Gilles Villeneuve (above) scored one of the principality's greatest wins, it would have been great to watch Leclerc attempt to hold off Verstappen in his quest for a home success and the first Ferrari F1 victory since the 2019 Singapore GP.

There were nevertheless still some highlights, including Carlos Sainz's second place for Ferrari and Sebastian Vettel's best drive for some time (p32) – and hats off to Lando Norris for his performance and to McLaren for that striking Gulf livery.

- While finishing this issue, news reached us of Max Mosley's passing. Whatever your views on the ex-FIA president, there's no doubt he had a big impact on the sport. Turn to p12 for our obituary.



Kevin Turner

Kevin Turner
Chief Editor

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**NEXT WEEK
3 JUNE**

George Russell interview
We talk to the British F1
star and bring you a full
Indy 500 report



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Red Bull, Schlegelmilch/Motorsport Images

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DIXON HANGS ON TO PIP HERTA TO POLE

INDIANAPOLIS 500

As good a racer as Scott Dixon has been over his 20-year Indycar career — six championships, 51 victories and counting — he is not the most prolific of pole position winners, with ‘only’ 27. And they have become particularly sparse of late: the 26th came at the Indianapolis 500 four years ago; the 27th arrived on the 2.5-mile superspeedway last Sunday.

It was Dixon’s fourth pole around the historic Indianapolis Motor Speedway, whose unique demands become even more demanding in qualifying, when the cars are trimmed out and can go through the Turns 1 and 3 speed traps at 240mph without the aid of a tow. Oh, and the grid is based on the average of four flying laps.

Saturday qualifying locked cars into starting positions 10 through 30, and decided which cars took part in Sunday’s Fast Nine shootout and which five cars competed to be on the back row in the traditional three-by-three line-up.

On Friday evening, when the qualifying draw was made to decide in what order everyone would make their initial four-lap qualifying attempts on Saturday, Dixon drew #1, which meant that although it would be hot, the conditions would still be more favourable for his Honda-powered Chip Ganassi Racing car than for the others. The 40-year-old admitted later that going first made him tense, trembling to the extent that he struggled to put on his socks, but in the car he handled it perfectly. His average of 231.828mph remained unbeatable that day, so he only went out once. That looked an even wiser decision when one of his team-mates, Alex Palou, trying to improve his speed with a second run (at that

point, he lay sixth), had a twitch through Turn 1, then lost the rear and drifted hard into the Turn 2 SAFER barrier, wiping off the right side of his car.

As things transpired, Palou’s original speed had been quick enough to get him into the Fast Nine shootout the next day — indeed, all four Ganassi cars graduated. Principal opposition to Chip’s chargers appeared to come from Colton Herta of Andretti Autosport, and a pair of Ed Carpenter Racing entries. Team owner Ed, a three-time polesitter at Indy, and his sophomore teammate Rinus VeeKay had together blown up the theory that Team Penske’s second successive year of lamentable underperformance in qualifying trim was down to Chevrolet lacking horsepower when the BorgWarner turbos are turned up from 1.3 bar (race level) to 1.5 bar for Fast Friday and qualifying weekend.

Sure enough, with the Fast Nine allowed just one run each, and going out in reverse order to how they’d finished Saturday qualifying, VeeKay became the first driver to breach the 232mph barrier with his opening lap, and survived a nasty wriggle in Turn 1 on his fourth lap to lay down an average of 231.511mph, mere hundredths ahead of team boss Carpenter who ran next. But then came Herta, and his third and fourth laps were significantly faster than VeeKay’s to go provisionally top.

His joy lasted about three minutes. Dixon’s opener was 0.4mph faster than Herta’s, so although he suffered greater drop-off and his third and fourth laps were slower than the Andretti driver’s, he snatched pole by 0.03mph — the equivalent of about six feet, after 10 miles.

“I could see the mechanics working on the car as we rolled through, adjusting the wings,” said Dixon. “I asked them not to tell me — I knew it was only going

Can Dixon
turn his fourth
Indy 500 pole into his
second win in
America's greatest
race?

ABBOTT
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one way, and that was trimming out more! I knew they were going to be pretty aggressive because we had already started pretty aggressive. At Turn 1 for the first lap it was very loose, and I was already maxed out on all the controls. I knew it was just going to be holding on for laps three and four.”

Ganassi cars being quick around Indy is hardly a shock, even if the team hasn't won there since 2012. The more noteworthy and pleasant surprises came on Saturday from Dale Coyne Racing. Ed Jones made a second run and, despite the track being unfavourably hot, delivered a speed that puts him in the middle of the fourth row. Meanwhile, his rookie team-mate Pietro Fittipaldi delivered on his opening run, and will start his first Indy 500 from the inside of row five.

PENSKE IN THE MIRE – AGAIN

Penske's malaise means its drivers line up 17th, 21st, 26th and 32nd. Yup, 2018 Indy winner Will Power had to wait until Last Chance qualifying on Sunday to get himself into the field, and even then he struck the Turn 2 wall on his run, and was slower than the Dreyer & Reinbold Racing car of Sage Karam.

Penske-affiliated Paretta Autosport, the new 'women forward' team, gave Simona de Silvestro a more stable car than she'd endured on Saturday, and so she too made it onto the grid for her sixth Indy 500. Karam, Power and de Silvestro were relieved to discover that neither the fourth Foyt entry of Indy veteran Charlie Kimball nor RC Enerson's car from start-up team Top Gun Racing had discovered any more speed overnight and were the ones left on the outside looking in.

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ



INDY 500 STARTING LINE-UP

POS	DRIVER	TEAM (ENGINE)	SPEED
1	Scott Dixon	Ganassi (Honda)	231.685mph
2	Colton Herta	Andretti (Honda)	231.655mph
3	Rinus VeeKay	Carpenter (Chevrolet)	231.511mph
4	Ed Carpenter	Carpenter (Chevrolet)	231.504mph
5	Tony Kanaan	Ganassi (Honda)	231.032mph
6	Alex Palou	Ganassi (Honda)	230.616mph
7	Ryan Hunter-Reay	Andretti (Honda)	230.499mph
8	Helio Castroneves	Meyer Shank (Honda)	230.355mph
9	Marcus Ericsson	Ganassi (Honda)	230.318mph
10	Alexander Rossi	Andretti (Honda)	231.046mph
11	Ed Jones	Coyne (Honda)	231.044mph
12	Pato O'Ward	McLaren SP (Chevrolet)	230.864mph
13	Pietro Fittipaldi	Coyne (Honda)	230.846mph
14	Felix Rosenqvist	McLaren SP (Chevrolet)	230.744mph
15	Takuma Sato	RLLR (Honda)	230.708mph
16	James Hinchcliffe	Andretti (Honda)	230.563mph
17	Scott McLaughlin	Penske (Chevrolet)	230.557mph
18	Graham Rahal	RLLR (Honda)	230.521mph
19	Conor Daly	Carpenter (Chevrolet)	230.427mph
20	Jack Harvey	Meyer Shank (Honda)	230.191mph
21	Josef Newgarden	Penske (Chevrolet)	230.071mph
22	JR Hildebrand	Foyt (Chevrolet)	229.980mph
23	Santino Ferrucci	RLLR (Honda)	229.949mph
24	Juan Pablo Montoya	McLaren SP (Chevrolet)	229.891mph
25	Marco Andretti	Andretti (Honda)	229.872mph
26	Simon Pagenaud	Penske (Chevrolet)	229.778mph
27	Sebastien Bourdais	Foyt (Chevrolet)	229.744mph
28	Stefan Wilson	Andretti (Honda)	229.714mph
29	Max Chilton	Carlin (Chevrolet)	229.417mph
30	Dalton Kellett	Foyt (Chevrolet)	228.323mph
31	Sage Karam	D&R (Chevrolet)	229.156mph
32	Will Power	Penske (Chevrolet)	228.876mph
33	Simona de Silvestro	Paretta (Chevrolet)	228.353mph



SUTTON
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Wolff warns of ‘messy’ Baku wing protest

FORMULA 1

Mercedes chief Toto Wolff has warned that Formula 1 risks a “very messy” protest over ‘flexi-wings’ if the FIA does not provide clarification before next week’s Azerbaijan Grand Prix.

Following comments by Lewis Hamilton about Red Bull’s “bendy wing” in Spain, it emerged that the FIA would be clamping down on the designs with more stringent tests starting from the French Grand Prix on 18-20 June.

But it sparked anger from

teams not running the flexi-wings that no added checks would be conducted at the next race in Baku, a track where they could prove particularly advantageous.

“I think if the limbo wings are on in Baku, with the advantage that we see, it’s going to go to the stewards,” said Wolff, indicating a protest was looming. “And if the stewards are not enough, then it’s going to go to the ICA [International Court of Appeal]. So I guess the FIA is going to clarify things before Baku, because if

not it could be very messy.”

McLaren and Aston Martin have also aired their frustration over the delay in introducing the new rigidity checks. “They had the advantage already for several races, which is something we’re obviously not happy with,” said McLaren F1 chief Andreas Seidl. “But now, allowing them to have further advantage for some more races is clearly something we strongly disagree with.”

Aston Martin’s Otmar Szafnauer added: “To design something that is stiff

doesn’t take effort at all. And it can be done very, very quickly.”

Red Bull, Ferrari and Alfa Romeo are among the teams known to be running flexi-wing designs. Ferrari team boss Mattia Binotto thought the lap time impact would be “very little”, but Szafnauer estimated it could cost up to half a second per lap.

Alfa Romeo chief Frederic Vasseur was unamused by the move, calling the ruling a “joke” and warning it will “cost us a fortune”.

LUKE SMITH

Briton Stoker to run for FIA presidency

FIA

FIA deputy president for sport Graham Stoker is running for the presidency of motorsport’s governing body in the election to be held later this year.

Stoker announced his candidacy to Motorsport Network president James Allen in the latest in Autosport’s series of #ThinkingForward podcasts, which was released on Tuesday. He is the second person to throw his hat into the ring, with former rally driver Mohammed Bin Sulayem the only opposition to Stoker at present.

British barrister Stoker became a motorsport fan as a child. After finding the cost of taking part himself prohibitive, he moved into the administration of the sport in the UK. He had five years as permanent steward in the British Touring Car Championship, and then became chairman of the RAC Motorsport Council, playing his part in saving the British Grand Prix that



Stoker (left) in 2015 with F3 talents Leclerc, Russell and Stroll

was under threat from then FIA president Max Mosley and Bernie Ecclestone by working with the national and regional government to have new roads constructed.

Stoker became an F1 steward and took a seat on the FIA World Motor Sport Council. This led him into contact with current president Jean Todt, then looking for a running mate as deputy for sport who knew all the corridors of the FIA, in 2009 after Max Mosley stood down.

“We’ve got to act to protect our sport,” said Stoker, whose running mate is Le Mans 24 Hours hero and FIA Drivers Commission chairman Tom Kristensen. “We’ve got such a great story to tell, like the Formula 1 engine, over 50% efficient. No one’s ever built an engine that efficient.

“Formula E – look what we’re doing there with rapid charging and battery technology. I think hydrogen is going to be a big part of our future. And the other thing I think that’s fascinating is e-fuels and the ability to capture carbon from the atmosphere and, with solar energy, create a synthetic fuel. Every time we start an engine up we’d actually be helping climate change.”

Stoker also wants a drive for inclusivity: “I want anyone with ability around the world to get an opportunity to get into a competition vehicle, just through talent.”



Listen to James Allen talk with Graham Stoker as part of Autosport’s series of #ThinkingForward podcasts.



PIKES PEAK The Le Mans 24 Hours-winning Champion Racing team has unveiled the car with which it will end a 12-season absence from competition in next month's Pikes Peak hillclimb. Florida-based Champion, which won Le Mans with Audi in 2005, has released the first photographs of the Porsche 911 GT2 RS Clubsport it has entered for the 'Race to the Clouds' in Colorado on 27 June for course record holder Romain Dumas. The car, pictured testing at Pikes Peak, incorporates a reworking of the team's trademark livery in which its cars raced from 1995 to 2005. **Photograph by Champion/Larry Chen Photography**

Aitken returns to F2 for Monaco and Azerbaijan

FORMULA 2

Williams Formula 1 reserve Jack Aitken has made a surprise return to Formula 2 for last weekend's round in Monaco and next week's Baku fixture.

Aitken has taken over the seat at HWA Racelab occupied by Matteo Nannini during the opening round. The Italian had embarked on a dual campaign with the German team in F2 and FIA Formula 3, but has elected to focus on F3.

Autosport understands that HWA was keen for an experienced head to fill the seat, and several drivers were considered for the role alongside Alessio Deledda.

Aitken, a four-time F2 race winner, had a challenging weekend in Monaco. He qualified 21st and finished the opening sprint race in 16th, before going on to climb to ninth in race two. A problem getting off the line in the feature race left the Anglo-Korean



SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

two laps down in 18th.

"What a weekend, unfortunately didn't get off the line in race three so it turned into a test session and pace was decent," said Aitken. "I'm still pumped we made it all the way

from P21 over the first two races with no pitstops to help us."

Aitken's deal is only for two events, with the team seeking a replacement driver from the mid-July Silverstone round.

TOM HOWARD

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Norris gets two more years at McLaren

FORMULA 1

Lando Norris has been rewarded for his strong start to the 2021 Formula 1 season with a new long-term McLaren contract.

Norris, 21, sits third in the standings after scoring his second podium of the year in Monaco last weekend, just days after his new McLaren deal was announced. The agreement ensures that Norris will remain with the team until at least the end of the 2023 season, and could open the door for involvement in McLaren projects such as IndyCar and a mooted sportscar programme.

"I'm really pleased to have extended my relationship with McLaren from 2022," said Norris. "Having been with the team for almost five years [initially as a junior protege], I feel very much part of the family here and I couldn't imagine starting the next phase of my career anywhere else."

McLaren team principal Andreas Seidl said the decision to extend Norris's contract was "very straightforward".

Norris has spearheaded McLaren's efforts so far this year as new team-mate Daniel Ricciardo continues to get up to speed, and said it was his goal to emerge as team leader in the long term. "That's what I want to achieve," he said. "I want to be that kind of guy who can lead the team, who has been there for many years, who has helped them through the bad times and help them achieve the good times."

Meanwhile, Alpine CEO Laurent Rossi has revealed that talks are under way to extend Esteban Ocon's contract with the team beyond the end of this year. Ocon said



Third place at Monaco
and two more years at
McLaren for Norris

he was flattered to read Rossi's comments via Autosport, but stressed that he was "focusing on doing the job I have to do on the track" and leaving his future to his management. Rossi said Alpine was

not considering any outside drivers to partner the already-signed Fernando Alonso for 2022, and explicitly ruled out a move for Pierre Gasly.

LUKE SMITH

W Series warms up with five days in Wales



W SERIES

The all-female W Series sprang back into life last week with a five-day test at Anglesey as the drivers prepare for the season, which kicks off with two rounds at the Red Bull Ring supporting the Austrian venue's Formula 1 events.

While Hitech Grand Prix ran the cars in the inaugural season in 2019, before W Series took a sabbatical

amid the pandemic last year, Autosport understands that the role has now fallen to a sister company to long-time single-seater squad Double R Racing, which is effectively operating under series racing director Dave Ryan.

Double R already has experience of centrally run single-seater series from its involvement in the Indian-organised MRF Challenge, in which Jamie Chadwick won the 2019 title

before scooping that year's W Series crown.

Chadwick was one of the 20 drivers at Anglesey last week, with British Formula 4 ace Abbi Pulling invited to join the regulars. "I've had encouraging feedback and I hope to be involved with W Series more in the future," said Pulling, who is coached by W Series ace Alice Powell (pictured left, on right, with Pulling).

MARCUS SIMMONS



Controversy hits Monaco round

FORMULA REGIONAL

Controversy hit the Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine last weekend at its showcase round supporting the Monaco Grand Prix.

It started after Friday's qualifying sessions, with a draconian penalty meted out to highly rated Argentinian Franco Colapinto. The MP Motorsport driver, third in last year's FRenault Eurocup, had qualified on the fourth row for the two races, but his lap times were taken away because two spacers in his steering rack had been inserted the wrong way round.

With 33 cars qualifying for 28 places on the grid, FRECA organisers guaranteed the fastest 23 a start in both races. The next fastest five started Sunday's race, and the slowest five, among them Colapinto after his exclusion, would line up on Saturday. But Colapinto, who struggles for budget and had lined up a sponsorship package for Monaco, and MP elected not to start at the back, due to the risk of damage prior to this weekend's Paul Ricard round.

MP previously contested the FRenault Eurocup, which merged with FRegional for this year to form the new FRECA. Autosport understands that the former FRenault scrutineer previously issued warnings to teams for oversights such as

this, rather than recommending exclusion. Sources suggest that, upon receiving the news of Colapinto's exclusion, other teams checked the fitting of their spacers (one plastic, one aluminium) and at least one car also had them the wrong way round.

"What happened is a disgrace," said MP boss Sander Dorsman. "The scrutineers and stewards of the FRECA championship should feel awful from penalising a driver in such a way on one of the most important weekends of Franco's career."

Sunday's race featured a red flag following a first-lap pile-up triggered by a collision involving ART Grand Prix's series leader Gregoire Saucy. Both ART and Prema Powerteam, whose leading title contender Paul Aron crashed after the restart, protested the result because the timing of the 30-minute race was paused, contravening Monaco event regulations.

The stewards found in favour of ART and Prema due to an error by race control and timekeeping, and the result backdated to lap 10 of the 19 completed, when the race should have finished. It did not affect the top 10 results, but had only half-points been awarded it would have softened the impact of Saucy's and Aron's mistakes upon their title aspirations. However, full points were awarded.

MARCUS SIMMONS

IN THE HEADLINES

REUTEMANN NOW AT HOME

Ex-Brabham, Ferrari, Lotus and Williams Formula 1 star Carlos Reutemann is out of hospital following his recent 17-day stay due to internal bleeding. The 79-year-old has returned to his home in Santa Fe.

VERGNE BACK TO ELMS

DS Techeetah Formula E and future Peugeot World Endurance Championship driver Jean-Eric Vergne will make a return to the LMP2 ranks in the European Le Mans Series at Paul Ricard next month with the IDEC Sport team. The Frenchman will replace Patrick Pilet, who will be on duty for Porsche in the clashing Nurburgring 24 Hours, alongside Paul-Loup Chatin and Paul Lafargue in the team's lead ORECA-Gibson 07.

MIDDLETON ON PODIUM

British Lamborghini racer Stuart Middleton claimed a podium on his debut last weekend in the Italian GT Endurance Championship at Enna-Pergusa in Sicily. Middleton, who shared an Imperiale Racing Huracan GT3 Evo with Alberto di Folco and Andrea Amici, drove the middle stint and moved into the lead. Amici later fell to second behind the winning Audi of Mattia Drudi, Lorenzo Ferrari and Riccardo Agostini, but just held off Giancarlo Fisichella's Ferrari at the flag. A five-second penalty for a yellow-flag infringement dropped the Lambo to third behind Fisichella.

VEIBY GETS COVID BAN

Hyundai WRC2 ace Ole Christian Veiby has been handed a six-month ban by the FIA for breaching COVID protocols, which means his season is over. Veiby was in contact with WRC2 points leader Andreas Mikkelsen on the Targa Florio rally. Mikkelsen then tested positive for COVID-19 on the Monday before Rally Portugal, and withdrew. Veiby tested negative, but failed to notify the FIA COVID delegate of his contact with Mikkelsen. He then tested positive after Thursday's shakedown.

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EXTREME E Meet the latest Extreme E driver: Prince William. The future king was at Knockhill last week and had a go in an Odyssey 21, with Andretti United driver Catie Munnings on hand to show him the ropes. The test was organised ahead of COP 26, which takes place in Glasgow this year, as part of a tour by HRH to visit innovative projects in Scotland that aim to protect the climate.

Button stands down for Senegal

EXTREME E

The arrival of Jenson Button in Extreme E marked arguably the biggest coup for the electric off-road championship, because he went a step further than fellow team owners and Formula 1 world champions Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg by driving for his own squad.

But Button will vacate the JBXE Racing machine this weekend in Senegal to 'concentrate' on his role as team principal, and has called up World Rallycross driver Kevin Hansen as his replacement alongside team-mate Mikaela Ahlin-Kottulinsky.

Button, the 2018 Super GT champion, finished the maiden event in Saudi Arabia sixth from the nine entries, but the three cars behind all suffered terminal crashes. The 2009 F1 title winner was among a cluster of drivers to raise concerns over the car's limited rear-suspension travel and skittish handling. He has committed to driving in the following round in Greenland.

"I'm obviously wearing two hats with JBXE as both a driver, but also team owner, and it's the latter which means having the opportunity to put Kevin in the car for this race was one I didn't want to pass up," Button said.

Hansen, son of 14-time European Rallycross champion Kenneth, will now compete against his brother, 2019 World Rallycross king Timmy. He was a member of the Extreme E Drivers' Programme and

tested the Odyssey 21 car in 2019.

Extreme E has also unveiled format tweaks for its return, with the originally intended four-car heats back on the agenda. The more settled Senegal sand is expected to improve visibility compared to the dust kicked up in Saudi that forced three-car grids.

A time trial has also been introduced through a designated 'Super Sector' in response to criticism of a lack of action after most heats at the Saudi opener were decided by the first corner. Five points will be awarded to the team whose driver runs fastest through the loop.

MATT KEW



LEVITT/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Andre Ribeiro 1966-2021

OBITUARY

Best known as the driver who claimed Honda's first win in Indycar racing, Andre Ribeiro has died of bowel cancer aged 55.

Ribeiro arrived in Europe in 1990 to compete in the Opel Lotus Euroseries alongside Marcel Albers at Team Lotus Nederland, and his highlight was combining with Rubens Barrichello in the Brazilian team to finish runner-up in the category's Nations Cup.

He made the step into British F3 in late 1991, partnering David Coulthard at Paul Stewart Racing. He stayed at PSR for 1992, claiming pole for the final round, before switching to Fortec Motorsport in 1993. That year, he placed fifth in the standings.

Ribeiro then went to the US in 1994, finishing runner-up to Tasman Motorsports team-mate Steve Robertson in Indy Lights. Tasman took him into Indycar in 1995, and he drove the team's Reynard-Honda to victory at the New Hampshire oval. The team switched to Lola chassis in 1996, and Ribeiro won at the Rio oval and Michigan.

In 1998, Ribeiro joined Team Penske, but the squad was at its lowest ebb. After a disastrous season, he retired aged 32, and ran a car dealership in Brazil in conjunction with Roger Penske.

"It was so sad to find out he'd gone," said Russell Eacott, his team manager at Fortec. "He was good in the car, never got upset, and he was just the nicest racing driver, but when he was on the track he wasn't a pushover."

MARCUS SIMMONS

Max Mosley

— 1940-2021 —

ADAM COOPER

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport
IMAGES**

It's perhaps inevitable that Max Mosley, who has died of cancer at the age of 81, will be forever defined by the tabloid scandal that dominated the last chapter of his life. But that shouldn't divert attention from the huge impact he made on motorsport over the decades. Mosley helped Bernie Ecclestone to build Formula 1 into the commercial giant that we know today, and as FIA president he reformed and modernised the organisation and relentlessly pursued safety improvements throughout the sport. He also pushed to improve road safety, a campaign that has saved countless lives worldwide.

Combining fierce intelligence with a ruthless determination and an easy charm that could win over opponents, Mosley was a powerful personality who would surely have succeeded in any career that he chose to pursue. His major regret was that he was never able to enter mainstream politics, a legacy of his family background. He could never escape the fact that his father was Sir Oswald Mosley, the notorious leader of the British Union of Fascists. When the former Conservative and Labour MP married society girl Diana Mitford in Germany in 1936, Adolf Hitler was the guest of honour.

The Mosleys were interned in 1940, and Max — who was born in April that year — spent his early life with his parents in Holloway prison. After hostilities ended he had a peripatetic childhood, moving around Europe, including a spell in Germany, before going to Oxford University to study physics. He met and married wife Jean while still an undergraduate.

In 1961, Mosley discovered motor racing by chance after Jean was given tickets to the International Trophy at Silverstone. He was hooked at first sight, and a brief trial at a racing school further convinced him. But he was lacking funds, and he focused instead on studying law, while spending his spare time on exercises with the territorial army. He was called to the bar in June 1964, gaining experience in court in cases such as motoring offences, before

concentrating on patents. He subsequently earned some spare cash teaching law in the evenings.

It took Mosley until 1966 to find the funding with which to kick-start his racing career and, after buying a Mallock U2, he entered his first Clubmans race at Snetterton. At first he was out of his depth, but by the following year he was winning races and setting lap records.

In June 1967 he managed to enter the Mallock in an international Formula 2 race at Crystal Palace, and therefore found himself on the same grid as drivers of the calibre of Bruce McLaren. Not surprisingly, he qualified and finished last in his heat. Enthused by the experience, Mosley decided to make the step up to F2 full-time for 1968, buying a Brabham BT23C from wheeler-dealer Frank Williams and entering it under the London Racing Team

“He was out of his depth, but by the following year was winning races and setting lap records”

banner alongside friend Chris Lambert. His first outing was at Hockenheim in April — the race at which Jim Clark lost his life — and he finished the two-part event in ninth overall. Further races followed, with little reward. By the time of the second Hockenheim race in June, his car was running under the Frank Williams banner, as team-mate to Piers Courage. A huge crash after contact with Jo Schlesser gave him a fright.

“Afterwards we were sitting having a glass of wine in the evening,” he would recall. “And Piers said to me, ‘I don’t know why you do this, because it is dangerous. You’ve got a very good career at the bar, but I would only ever have been a very second-rate accountant.’ He was

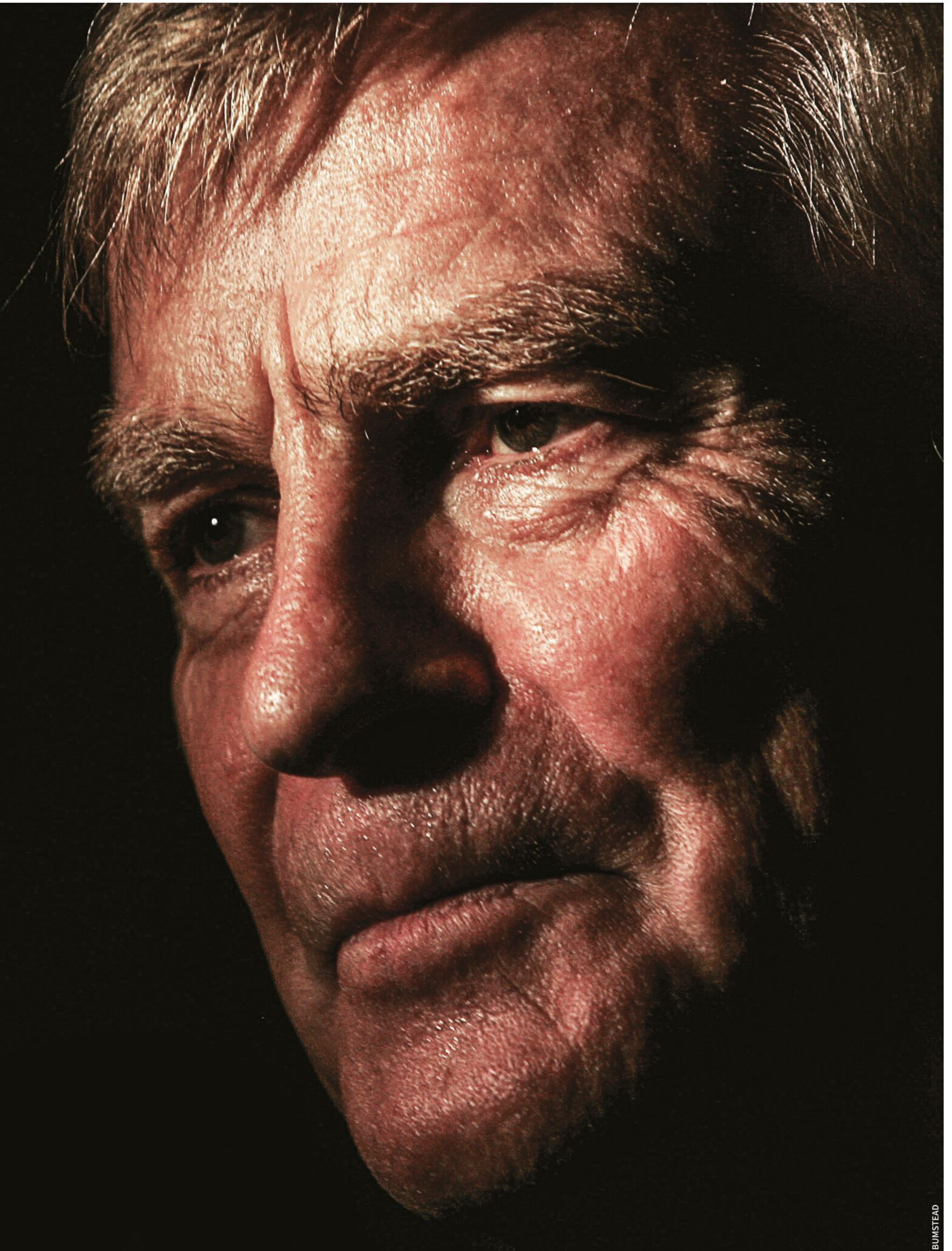
more or less saying I was quite mad to do it.”

Mosley's main concern was for his wife, and Schlesser's death in the French GP just a few weeks later was a further reminder of the dangers. He subsequently finished a respectable eighth at Monza, and then crashed at Zandvoort, where an earlier accident claimed the life of former team-mate Lambert.

For the 1969 season, Mosley acquired a Lotus 59 F2 car. He campaigned it first at a Jarama event that was billed as a non-championship F1 race, but which attracted no serious entries. On his second outing at the Nurburgring he had a heavy practice >>



Mosley at the wheel of his F2 Brabham at Vallelunga in 1968



BUMSTEAD



Peterson scored March's last F1 win in the 1976 Italian GP at Monza

crash after the suspension broke. Another failure in testing at Snetterton was the final straw and he retired from driving.

Mosley focused instead on a new project that would lead him to also abandon his law career. In 1968 he had met up with Robin Herd, an acquaintance from his Oxford days. Herd had left the aerospace industry to become McLaren's first designer, and was now freelancing for Frank Williams. The two men gelled, and they soon hatched plans to enter Formula 1, and also build F2 and F3 cars. Herd brought Alan Rees and Graham Coaker on board, and March Engineering was born.

Mosley's role was to find sponsors for March's works F1 team, sell cars to customers, and generally promote the new organisation. The first F3 car was raced in late 1969 by Ronnie Peterson and James Hunt, but it was just a taster for a hugely ambitious programme for the following year.

Against the odds, Mosley convinced Ken Tyrrell, who needed to replace his Matra chassis, to buy Marches for world champion Jackie Stewart and Francois Cevert. At the first race of 1970 in South Africa, the Tyrrell entries were joined on the grid by STP-backed 701s for Chris Amon, Mario Andretti and Jo Siffert. Stewart finished third and won the next two events, the Race of Champions and the Spanish GP. Amon then triumphed at the International Trophy with the works car. March had arrived with a bang and, while Tyrrell soon switched to its own chassis, the brash new operation had established itself as both a works team and supplier of customer cars.

In 1971, Peterson finished second in the world championship, despite not winning a race, and he also became March's first European F2 champion. That year the team gave Niki Lauda his F1 debut — Mosley, who also engineered cars on race weekends, became close to both men. The team's fortunes took a dive in 1972 when Herd's 721X proved unsuccessful. Meanwhile, the customer side of the business thrived, with Frank Williams competing in F1, and huge sales in F2 and F3.

After a couple of low-key seasons for the F1 team in 1973-74, the colourful Vittorio Brambilla showed good pace in 1975, scoring the works team's first grand prix win in the rain in Austria. The 1976 season was the team's most hectic, as it fielded works cars for Peterson, Brambilla, Hans Stuck and Arturo Merzario, all with different sponsorship packages. Rejuvenated after losing his way at Lotus, returnee Peterson was a regular frontrunner, winning at Monza.

Funds were always lacking, and at the end of a dismal 1977 season with paying drivers the F1 team's assets were sold to ATS, and the focus switched fully to F2 and F3. Mosley was no longer involved with selling customer cars and, with no requirement to find F1 sponsors, he left the company.

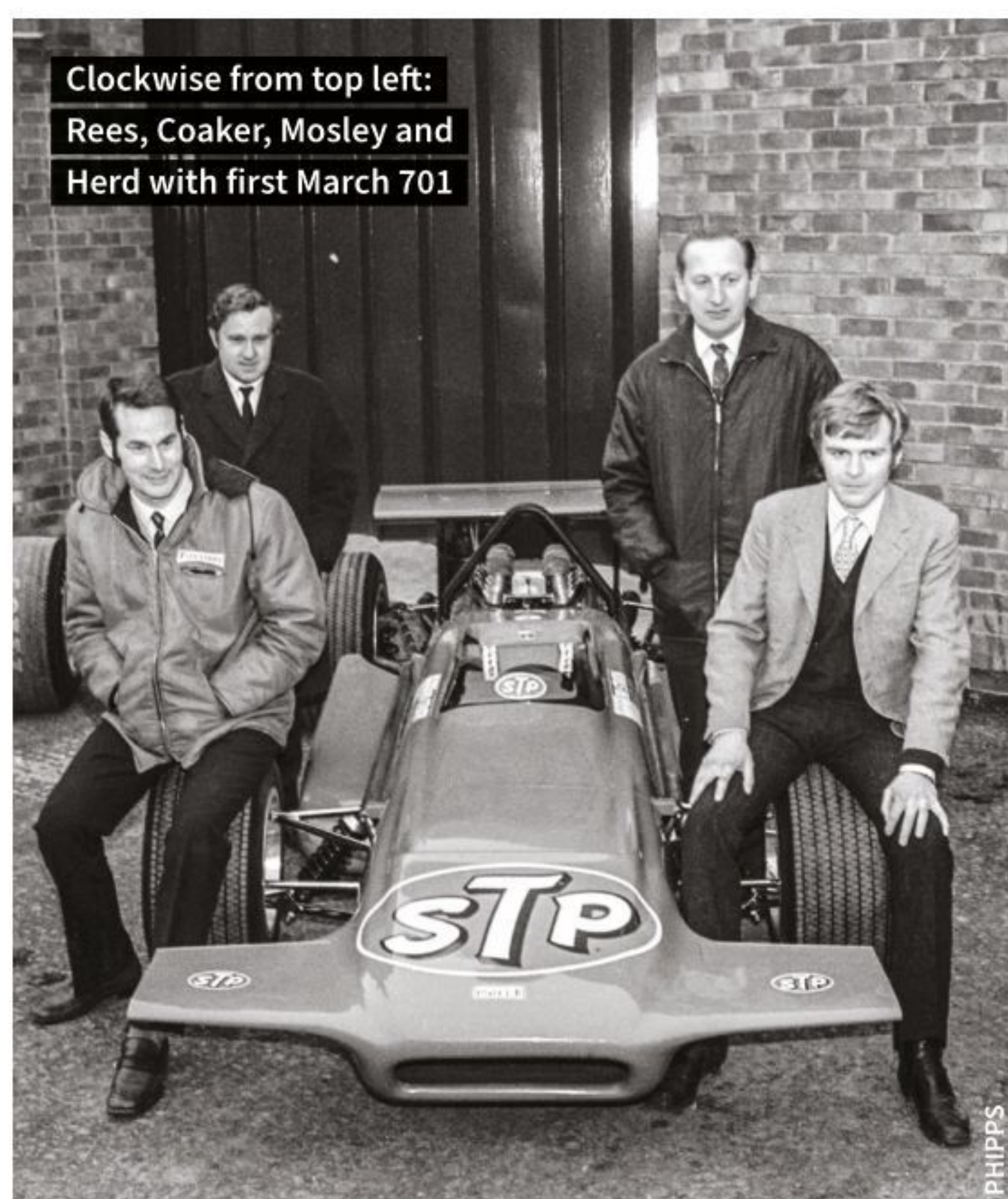
By then much of his attention had been diverted elsewhere. From 1970 he had taken a keen interest in the operation of what was then known as F1CA, the Formula 1 Constructors' Association, whose main role was to negotiate finances with circuits. Other team bosses were too busy running their own operations to devote much time to the bigger picture. Then, in 1971, Bernie Ecclestone became the owner of Brabham. Mosley knew him vaguely as the former manager and friend of the late Jochen Rindt. In F1CA meetings they recognised each other as kindred spirits, and their fellow bosses were happy to let them take charge. So began a friendship that would endure for 50 years. They were a perfect team, Ecclestone's streetwise negotiating savvy gelling with Mosley's easy-going charm, sharp legal brain and long-term strategic vision.

This was the time of the blue-blazer brigade, with organising clubs run by an old-boy network, and no consistency between events. The Mosley/Ecclestone combination proved formidable, and over the years they built up the influence of the teams, getting better deals from race promoters worldwide, and swinging the balance of power away from the CSI, the sporting arm of the FIA.

It was not an overnight process, and it continued through the 1970s. Then, in 1978, French federation boss Jean-Marie Balestre became president of the CSI, soon changing its name to FISA.

Balestre made it clear that he wanted to control F1, including the commercial side that the recently renamed FOCA had built up. From the start there was confrontation. At the end of 1980, FOCA announced plans for its own championship, with the backing of many event promoters. In early 1981, as a show of strength, the organisation held a non-championship race in South Africa. Shortly afterwards the first Concorde Agreement, which formally handed the commercial control of the sport to Ecclestone and FOCA, was signed — and Mosley was one of its main architects. Initially it was to run for only four years, but it would be successively renewed.

Mosley left his FOCA activities at the end of 1982, and for a while focused his efforts on politics, hoping to become a Conservative MP. His obvious concern was that his father's



Clockwise from top left: Rees, Coaker, Mosley and Herd with first March 701



“Mosley was ahead of the game in many areas, pursuing carbon neutrality as early as 1995”

legacy would be an issue, even after his death in 1980. He worked for the party at the 1983 general election but, when his attempts to get on the candidates' list met with little enthusiasm, he reluctantly gave up his ambitions.

He turned his attention back to motorsport. With Ecclestone's and Balestre's support, in 1986 he became president of the FIA's manufacturers' commission, representing the car makers' involvement in non-F1 activities, notably rallying and sportscar racing. He also set up a design business with Nick Wirth.

The commission job gave Mosley a seat on the World Motor Sport Council and an opportunity to network and successfully establish himself as an FIA insider. In 1991, Balestre's latest term as FISA president expired, and Mosley stood against him. Against the veteran Frenchman's expectations, Mosley won by 43 votes to 29. Two years later he replaced Balestre as president of the full FIA, and he set about modernising and restructuring the outdated organisation.

In 1994, the F1 world was rocked by the deaths of Ayrton Senna and Roland Ratzenberger at Imola, and a series of other serious accidents. Action had to be taken, and in what was his finest hour Mosley reacted fast and decisively in attempting to slow the cars and address safety issues. Looking to the future, he set up a safety committee, chaired by Professor Sid Watkins and including Charlie Whiting, Harvey Postlethwaite and Gerhard Berger. Its initial mandate was to conduct research into cockpit safety, corners and runoffs, and barriers. It was the start of a formal and concerted effort by the FIA that quickly made significant progress, and which continues to this day.

Mosley was re-elected as president in 1997, 2001 and 2005. The safety campaign aside, his tenure included many significant episodes in F1 history, notably the spy scandal of 2007, when McLaren was accused of benefiting from information stolen from Ferrari, and the threat from the manufacturers of a breakaway championship, which he and Ecclestone successfully saw off.

Mosley was ahead of the game in many areas, pursuing a carbon-neutrality policy as early as 1995, and later backing KERS and a



return to small turbo engines as ways of promoting a more energy-efficient sport. He also tried hard to reduce costs in F1, exasperated by the money wasted by the teams.

In March 2008, Mosley's world was turned upside down when the *News of the World* published a story about an encounter with five prostitutes, complete with video footage. His life was never to be the same again. He survived a storm within the sport, winning a vote of confidence from the FIA. But he had been irreparably damaged, and eventually he announced that he would not stand again for the presidency in 2009.

Having won a legal action against the *News of the World*'s owners, he became a tireless campaigner for privacy rights and press reform. In 2015 he published an autobiography, detailing his career with March, FOCA and the FIA, as well as his legal actions and the privacy campaign. More recently he contributed to a film documentary that covered similar ground, and which will be released in July.

Mosley will forever remain a controversial and divisive character, and he created a few enemies over the years. Love or him or loathe him, there are racing drivers and thousands of people from many other walks of life who are alive today as a direct result of his efforts. He remained chairman of Global NCAP until as recently as 2017.

A decade earlier, when this writer asked him what he would like his legacy to be, his answer was unequivocal. “The thing about F1 is that you can make a huge effort there and you maybe save one life every five years,” he said, “whereas on the roads it's literally thousands of people. If I'm still alive when I'm 80, I'd like to be able to sit down and think I really made a difference, and there are a lot of people walking around hale and hearty who would not have been if I hadn't made the effort. If I can say that to myself, I'd be very pleased.”

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Another hard home lesson

Charles Leclerc appears to have a Monaco jinx going back to his days in F2, with the latest mishap the most high-profile. But he'll learn from it, improve and move on

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

I think it's the most disappointing moment in my whole career because of being at Monaco. The weekend really was perfect until then." Charles Leclerc spoke those words to Autosport in his home city, but he didn't say them last weekend. This was four years ago, when his sensational charge to the 2017 Formula 2 title was just getting going.

He'd dominated on his home streets; he's taken pole and was leading the feature race. But not long afterwards his run of home-racing misery was set in action. In 2018, then a Sauber Formula 1 rookie, he smashed into the back of Brendon Hartley's Toro Rosso due to a brake problem exiting the tunnel, while a year later, as Ferrari's new star, he was unfortunate to get knocked out in Q1, then tagged Nico Hulkenberg at Rascasse and ruined his race. Last weekend's Q3 crash and subsequent non-start brings us up to date.

What threads through all these incidents is Leclerc's pace and resilience. It's also worth remembering that just a few weeks after his Monaco F2 disappointment, he won both races in Baku on the road (later losing the sprint race to a contentious yellow flag penalty) just days after his father's death. This is a very tough character.

But what Leclerc must now be wrestling with is the process of moving on from losing Ferrari's best chance to win a grand prix since 2019. As a rival team noted to Autosport over the weekend in the principality, the SF21 has been tracked displaying strong apex

"Leclerc was guilty of making a small misjudgement that had enormous consequences"

speed at every race so far this season, but only in Monaco was its continuing power deficit taken out of the equation.

That potential, plus the enormous risk of doing exactly the damage he did (Ferrari has now confirmed that the exact reason why Leclerc could only manage a solitary pre-race lap was because of a broken left driveshaft hub that was a result of the Q3 shunt), blows a hole in any suggestion that he crashed on purpose. In the age of social media cynicism, sure, it's plausible, but it's just not on.

Leclerc was absolutely guilty of making a small misjudgement that had enormous consequences, and he probably was aware that his track position meant he could afford to risk just that bit more to make up for time lost early in his final lap. Perhaps the track evolution, much less of a factor than it had been in Thursday practice because of the cooler conditions on Saturday, caught him

out. The car simply looked like it gripped better and took him to the apex earlier than he was expecting.

But you can be sure that Leclerc must and will own this error. It was notable that in the aftermath of the accident, his team radio did not feature any of the remarkable self-abuse that Leclerc has previously spouted after making costly mistakes (such as his pole-costing Baku 2019 Q2 crash and his podium-losing slip at the final corners in Turkey last year).

Perhaps this is a facet of Leclerc's game he has vowed to move on from, which will be worth asking him next time out in Azerbaijan. After all, Max Verstappen doesn't feel the need to publicly admit to mistakes in F1's ruthless environment... But then, Leclerc was soon admitting to feeling "quite shit" about the situation, given the circumstances that could and did play out as a result.

But he's historically displayed a positive knack for self-improvement that he can rely on again in 2021. After making several lap-one errors in 2020 as he sought to overcome Ferrari's massive pace deficit, he vowed to "choose my fights a little bit better" this year. So far, he has done so. But he has also proved that he will always go for open goals against faster cars by battling past Valtteri Bottas in Bahrain, and then putting the move of the Spanish GP on the same rival at that race's third corner.

Leclerc has even turned around what was rightly perceived as a weakness for not delivering when it matters most in qualifying in 2018. Now, he's one of F1's best against the clock, and his confident approach has brought him pole at two street tracks, even if the most recent came in such bizarre circumstances.

"I went for it at the end," he said after qualifying last weekend. "It's one of my strengths sometimes and it's why sometimes I am good in qualifying. It's also why I've done this mistake. Whether this will make me change the approach for all the races to come, no, because at the end I had to go for it."

But Leclerc will have to examine the precise circumstances of what went wrong, and incorporate the lessons into his thrilling qualifying approach. He'll be an even better driver because of it.

Of his Ferrari squad, it must be said that it appears to be improving considerably of late. The Monaco layout helped but, as Carlos Sainz Jr said after finishing second behind Verstappen in the race, "we nailed the set-up". But the long straights in Baku next time out present a big hurdle...

Having Ferrari in the hunt at the front of the grid last weekend, with a home hero driver on song, created a brilliant narrative. It ended up being the latest tough tale written on his local streets, but Leclerc's past record suggests the coming chapter of his story will yet be glorious. ❧


P18 MONACO GP REPORT

RACE CENTRE

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Verstappen was hampered by wheelspin at the start so was swift to block Bottas



VERSTAPPEN GRABS THE ADVANTAGE IN MONACO

*Ill fortune for Mercedes and Ferrari helped the Red Bull star
to an easy win — and the championship lead for the first time*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY



motorsport
IMAGES

The 2021 Monaco Grand Prix was a unique edition in the event's storied history. But this was more down to the restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which meant it was subdued compared to its regular pomp, than anything wildly unusual happening in the race's 78 laps.

But there was still something of a celebratory atmosphere the night ahead of the grand prix. Hometown hero Charles Leclerc had claimed pole in bizarre circumstances given his late Q3 crash, which prevented others improving. That led to Monegasque flag-bearing yachts and cars blaring their appreciation as dusk rolled in. As he cycled home from the track, Leclerc remained anxious about the extent to which he'd smashed his SF21 against the barriers at the Swimming Pool complex's exit, but the prospect of a famous home win was still tantalisingly talked up.

The next evening, the horns honoured another driver – Red Bull's Max Verstappen. He'd dominated another dull Monaco procession, which was cruelly robbed of the storyline that might have kept it captivating even if there had still been no lead exchanges. But no sole development led to the lifeless affair – several factors combined to create the eventual reality.

REASON ONE LECLERC'S CRUEL NON-START

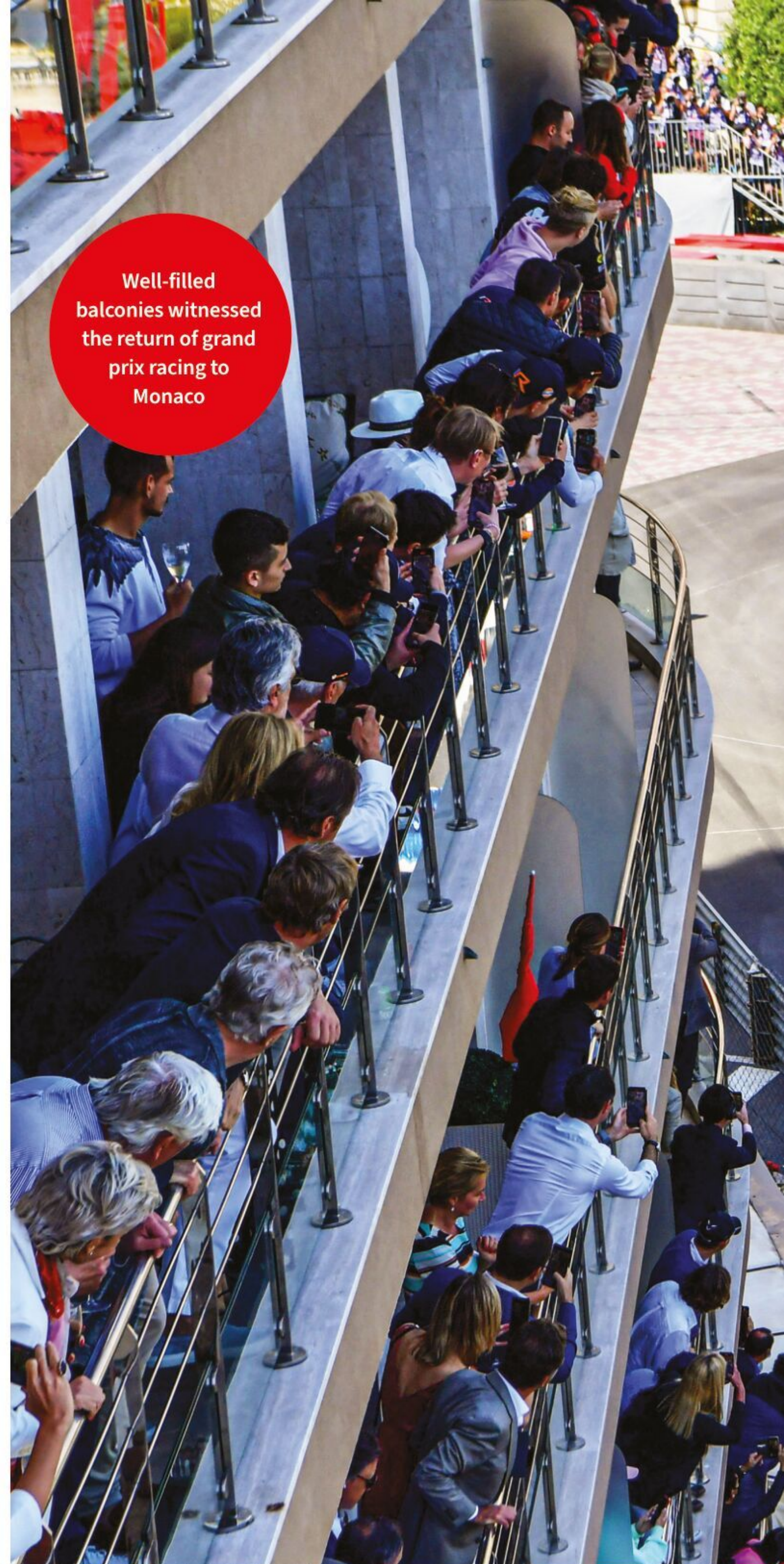
After Leclerc's crash, he was mainly worried that the impact had damaged his gearbox (already changed after FP1), which would have meant a five-place grid drop if it needed replacing again.

But a preliminary Saturday night inspection had not revealed any serious damage, with Ferrari pledging to undertake further checks ahead of the race. These too were said to have found "no apparent defects" on Leclerc's gearbox, and he duly moved to take his car to the pole grid spot. Here, an advertising board bearing a giant image of his own face looked down, hung behind the giant grandstand beyond Tabac and overlooking the start/finish straight.

But, just a few minutes after the limited local spectators had cheered Leclerc into the Ferrari garage, he was being wheeled back into it after doing just a single pre-race lap.

Exiting the hairpin on what should have been the first of several tours ahead of lining up on the grid, Leclerc reported the problem he'd feared. "No, no... the gearbox, guys..." he exclaimed, his head in his hands as he toured back to the pits. There, Ferrari discovered that the problem was actually coming from the "left hub driveshaft wheel", according to team boss Mattia Binotto.

Ferrari was adamant that even if it had changed Leclerc's gearbox,



Well-filled balconies witnessed the return of grand prix racing to Monaco



Leclerc's qualifying shunt was followed by bitter pill of race withdrawal





ANDRE

the driveshaft issue still would have occurred as “those parts would still have been on the car because they were not damaged from [the] accident”, according to Binotto. But he still couldn’t conclusively rule out the crash being a contributing factor. Whatever, the damage was done. Leclerc was heartbreakingly out before the start.

“It’s difficult because it’s at home,” he later reflected. “It’s not every day that we have the chance to be in such a good place. But, yeah, at the end, it’s like this. It’s part of motorsport and these things can happen.”

REASON TWO VERSTAPPEN NAILS THE START FROM ‘POLE’

Leclerc’s disaster handed Verstappen a golden chance to take a first Monaco win and make amends for having “shunted a few too many times” here in the past, as he acknowledged post-race.

Ahead of the start, Red Bull sporting director Jonathan Wheatley had cannily asked F1 race director Michael Masi if the drivers would all be shuffled up one spot, because Valtteri Bottas had the inside line

on the run to Sainte Devote from third behind Verstappen. But Masi quickly quashed the question. “The final grid was issued by the stewards, within the timeframes outlined within the sporting regulations,” he explained. “So, after that point there is no framework for it to happen and accordingly the position was left vacant.”

Verstappen “didn’t think [P2] was a great spot to start” because “the grip wasn’t amazing” at that point on the start/finish straight. And his concern became reality when the RB16B’s wheels spun up as the lights went out. This cost Verstappen momentum as Bottas dived quickly forwards. But the net ‘polesitter’ wasn’t having it – he chopped off the Mercedes’ line to make certain he maintained the lead heading into the first corner.

“He was drifting to the right, and it meant I had to lift otherwise we would have crashed,” said Bottas. “He was still ahead so he can defend. Hard but within the limits I think. There was nowhere to go with it.”

Given the difficulty of passing at Monaco, another chance to enliven the race had rapidly been lost, with the fastest car/driver combo now in command at the head of the pack. >>



Norris really struggled on hard tyres as Perez closed in, but he hung on for podium finish

REASON THREE BOTTAS'S CHALLENGE FADES THEN DISAPPEARS

For the first 15 laps, Verstappen led proceedings at a rather sedate pace, his advantage over Bottas never exceeding two seconds during that period. The classic modern Monaco pace-managing techniques were on full display, the leaders not wanting to stress their soft tyres, while still building up enough margin over the drivers on the harder compounds to be sure of pitting and rejoining clear of those on the hards when the time eventually came.

But in the next 13 laps, which led up to what would be Bottas's only stop of the race, Verstappen increased his lead by an average of 0.267 seconds per lap. This meant that when Bottas came into the pits at the end of lap 29, the gap to Verstappen had just ballooned to five seconds.

"Max started to lift his pace," Bottas explained of this phase of the race. "And the more I had to push, the front left tyre started to give up more than his, so I lost a bit of ground."

"IN SHORT ORDER YOU JUST MACHINE THE NUT DOWN TO WHERE THERE IS NOTHING LEFT TO GRAB HOLD OF"

Bottas was sliding back from Verstappen and into the clutches of the pursuing Carlos Sainz Jr, who had initially dropped back from the two leaders in the early running. But once the slow tours eking out tyre life had passed, the Ferrari was suddenly looking strong. Sainz closed in on Bottas, and was 1.8s behind the Mercedes at the end of the lap before it stopped, feeling "a bit stuck". But help was on its way.

Sainz's assistance arrived from a Mercedes wheelgun when Bottas came in to exchange his softs for hards. "We call it machining the nut,"

Mercedes technical director James Allison said of the problem that followed. It left Bottas sat in the pits for over a minute before his race was declared over, and meant the W12 is heading back to Brackley with the right-front soft still attached.

"The gun starts spinning and chipping off the driving faces of the wheelnut. In quite short order, given the power of the gun, you can end up with no driving face and you just machine the nut down to a place where there is nothing left to grab a hold of. That is what we had."

REASON FOUR VERSTAPPEN'S EARLY SECOND-STINT GAP REDUCTION WAS MISLEADING

With Verstappen's closest rival suddenly removed from the race, Red Bull opted to leave him out until lap 34, which took him two tours past Sainz's stop, in which the Spaniard had taken the hards. The gap between them was 6.8s at the end of Verstappen's out-lap, but four laps later it was just 3.2s.

Suddenly, Verstappen's position didn't look all that commanding. Ferrari's pace had been evident from early in practice, and Sainz had looked menacing behind Bottas before getting a free pass into second. The race was rather finely poised. But over the next 10 laps, Verstappen reversed the slump, held Sainz at a comfortable distance, and then finally drove away once again.

"Initially I had Checo in front of me," Verstappen explained, referring to his out-lap, where Sergio Perez briefly led as he executed a textbook overcut to leap past Lewis Hamilton, Pierre Gasly and Sebastian Vettel. Verstappen was ordered to "just stay behind him" as "he was pushing to get ahead of a few people".

"I had to save a bit of fuel anyway," Verstappen added. "I did that and then of course the gap got a lot smaller, but there was nothing that was worrying or anything behind it. [I was] just slowly building up to it, because these hard tyres are not very nice to drive around here. They're like slippery in the beginning, especially when you come out of the pits. I just wanted to settle in first."



REASON FIVE SAINZ COULDN'T HOLD THE PACE TO REALLY THREATEN

Sainz had been usurped as Ferrari's faster driver come qualifying, but he made a real fist of keeping Verstappen honest in the race's second half. The Red Bull's early fuel saving behind Perez and only gradually leaning on the hards had brought Sainz nicely into play. But he knew his chances were heavily restricted by Monaco's track position premium.

"The first 20 laps I was pushing but not like crazy," he outlined. "Then I decided to try and close the gap to Max, to put him a bit under pressure, obviously knowing here that the chance of a mistake is super-low and that he's been quick all weekend."

With 30 laps to go, Sainz put in a string of times in the 1m14s, but Verstappen was equal to the barrage. The gap briefly dipped below three seconds (to 2.8s) on lap 49, but it never got that low again. "We went through a phase of a lot of lapped cars," said Sainz. "[Then] it was difficult to keep the focus. Also, it cooled the tyres off and at the same time it opened a lot of graining – the combination of trying to catch Max, coming through blue flags and everything."

Sainz's eventual struggles meant Verstappen's lead reached 9s by the finish, where the pair were joined on the podium by the driver who'd spent the majority of the race with third place in hand.

REASON SIX MONACO LAYOUT THWARTS A LATE PEREZ PASS FOR THIRD

But things weren't exactly calm for Lando Norris as the race reached the final stages. For the first 15 laps after Perez had pitted and leapfrogged the three cars he'd trailed in the race's first half (thereby saving his tyres nicely to use his machine's potential in free air to devastating effect), the gap to Norris was largely stable. There was a regular seven/eight-second difference between the pair, and things looked set in place. But Norris, who had been doing "a lot of fuel-saving at certain times", was not happy on the hards he'd taken on lap >>

QUALIFYING



When Monaco Grand Prix Q3 ended, the boats in the harbour blared their approval at the hometown hero topping qualifying. But Charles Leclerc was in the barriers feeling "quite shit", unable to celebrate pole in the usual circumstances. For one thing, no driver can celebrate a crash; for another, he faced an anxious wait to discover whether the damage would mean changing a gearbox or chassis and therefore taking a pole-losing grid penalty.

Saturday was overcast and muggy – overnight rain had washed away much of the rubber laid down in Thursday practice and things were cooler overall. This forced the teams to quickly adapt their critical flying-lap preparation strategies. The tyres had to be properly worked up to their optimum temperatures, with the cooler surface meaning track evolution was not as big a factor as it had been in FP2, when Ferrari's pole potential became clear as it topped the session with Leclerc leading Carlos Sainz Jr.

Despite being second as Thursday practice ended, it had been Sainz who had looked as if he would prevail in the intra-Maranello scrap, the Spaniard second to Max Verstappen in FP3. Then, with a few minutes of Q1 remaining, Leclerc surged ahead and did not look back. He was fastest in Q2, after Fernando Alonso had been the highest-profile Q1 faller.

In the end, the opening Q3 runs set the grid. Leclerc led the way with a 1m10.346s, with Verstappen 0.23 seconds behind after a mistake that cost him momentum exiting the chicane. Valtteri Bottas was able to overcome the tyre warm-up issues that were hurting Mercedes better than Lewis Hamilton, slotting into third.

On the final runs, with Lando Norris doing a sole mid-Q3 effort to take fifth, Verstappen and Bottas were adamant that they were improving. The Red Bull had set the fastest time in the opening sector, while Bottas "felt there was a good lap on the way" after he'd opted for an extra preparation tour. But it all came to nothing.

Leclerc had been unable to recreate his searing pace from the start of Q3 in the opening sector, so "tried to push a bit more" in the final third. But he made "a misjudgement" at the second part of the Swimming Pool, clipping the inside barrier, breaking his front-right suspension and spearing into the outside walls. The red flags flew, and Leclerc's unusual post-pole reactions began.

Sainz was also annoyed to miss finishing his final Q3 lap, and he ended up fourth, with Pierre Gasly an excellent sixth. Then came Hamilton. The world champion scored his lowest grid spot since the 2018 German GP (which he won).

"LECLERC 'TRIED TO PUSH A BIT MORE', BUT MADE 'A MISJUDGEMENT', CLIPPING THE BARRIER"



TRACKSIDE VIEW

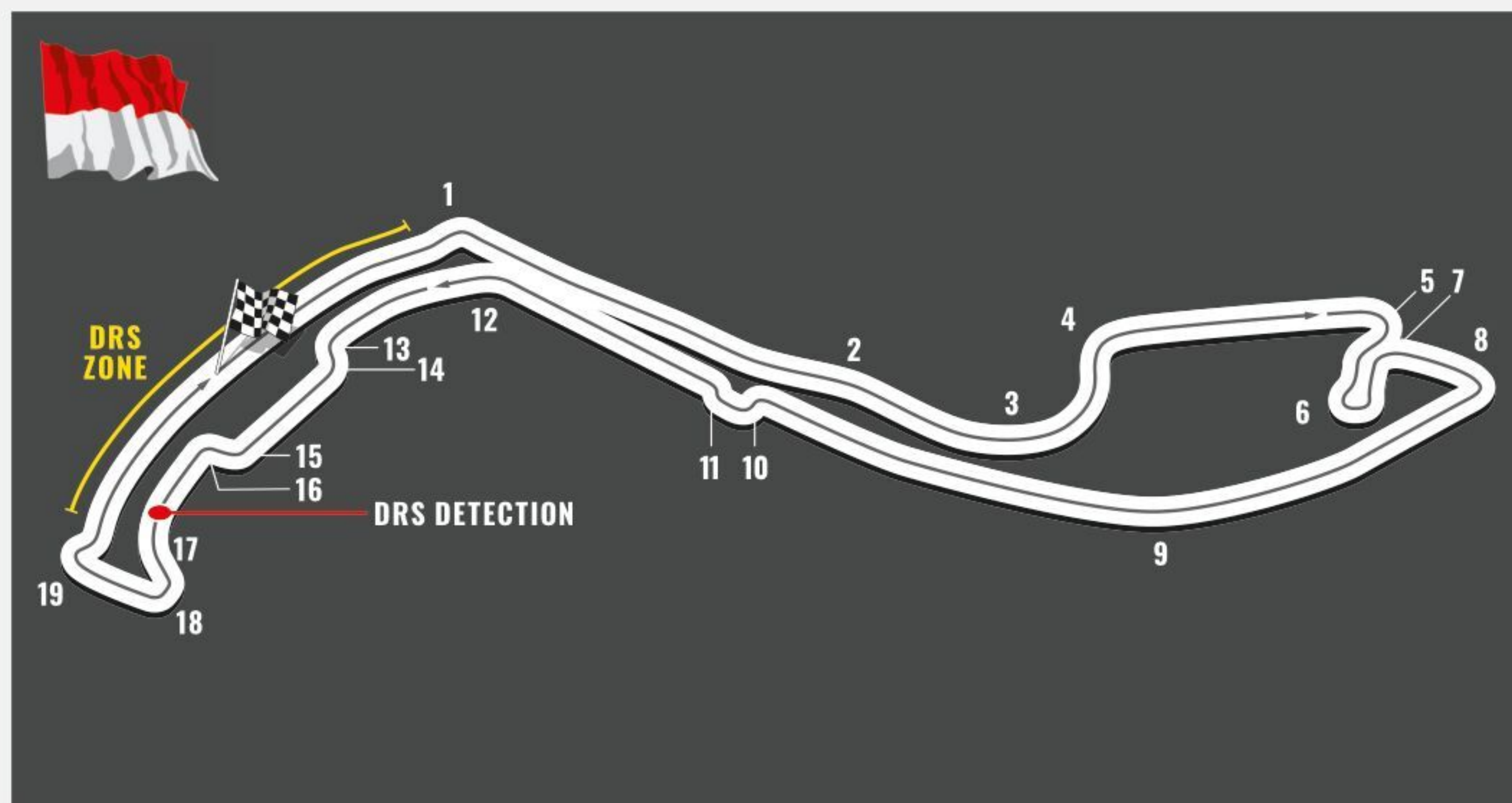
Autosport is satisfied, having been briefly alarmed. Just a few moments ago, a Monaco Grand Prix marshal had grabbed a nearby crowd control barrier and stared us down. A pause, which we may have imagined, followed: “Stand right here... It’s the *best* place to watch!”

We’re more than happy to comply, now set with a fantastic vantage point behind the outside barriers opposite the Rascasse bar. In a few minutes, the cars will leave the pitlane for FP1’s start and head out for their opening laps. When they arrive here, they will be running head-on towards us before, hopefully, slowing enough to take the first right-hand apex of the circuit’s penultimate corner.

The marshal was of course correct – it’s a magnificent viewpoint. The high-rise tower blocks and mountains bordering the principality ring the scene, a flock of gulls hovering down in brilliantly blue skies towards the Sainte Devote/Tabac area at the harbour’s innermost point. Then come the cars.

Trackside access for the media is restricted after this session, so we’re limited to viewing the drivers building towards the limit during the opening 60-minute session, but it’s useful, nevertheless.

Nikita Mazepin provides an insight into a rookie driver learning the course in Formula 1 machinery for the first time, getting slightly



“WE MARVEL AT THE ONE-OFF McLAREN LIVERY FOR THIS EVENT – IT IS STUNNING”

too close to the left-hand barrier on approach to the first apex in the early stages. In an instant he realises the error and jerks the steering wheel right, which avoids the wall but costs him the ideal line. Later in the session George Russell does something similar, but he’s pushing on the softs and is able to dance his Williams FW43B right and right again, seemingly without losing momentum.

We marvel at the one-off

McLaren livery for this event – it is stunning – then are quickly frustrated by the special helmet colours Daniel Ricciardo and Lando Norris are running here, which makes them tough to differentiate. Although he’s barely on-track in FP1 due to a gearbox problem, Charles Leclerc’s Louis Chiron tribute stands out nicely. Fernando Alonso earns notoriety for coming by with half his front wing knocked off just before the halfway point.

Considering the potential the Rascasse complex has to cost drivers time, we see remarkably few errors – Nicholas Latifi’s long slide and near stop by the outside barriers around the second apex in the final minutes the biggest –

and no lock-ups. But it’s still early in the weekend, the margins are maintained and the limit unabused, for now. Still, it’s possible to discern the more confident drivers taking the first apex wider and carrying more speed through the second as a result.

And it’s here that we observe our main takeaway. The turning speed of modern F1 cars around what is a 90-degree corner with tight surrounding confines is remarkable. The long-wheelbase machines just rotate stunningly, their drivers on the power so early, shooting away and onto another lap of this famous course time and time again.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS





Verstappen and his crew have a lot to celebrate – race victory and the points lead

30. They quickly turned his McLaren into “a very hard car to drive” and, when the race reached lap 50, this really started to bite him.

From there, Perez ate into Norris’s lead, and the gap was at its smallest – 0.6s – at the end of lap 66. But he never got close enough to try a passing attempt as “overtaking here requires a high level of risk that probably today, considering that it was such an important day in the championship, we can be pleased [with fourth]”.

Norris’s run to the flag had been made all the more stressful because he’d received a black-and-white warning flag from Masi for cutting the chicane twice during the opening 18 laps. “[It] made my engineer Will [Joseph] extremely nervous,” Norris admitted. “If I made one more mistake and went off I would have a five-second penalty and Perez would be ahead of me...”

It was all academic, as Norris held on to score his second podium of 2021’s opening five races, 1.1s clear of Perez at the finish.

REASON SEVEN HAMILTON’S ABSENCE FROM THE LEAD FIGHT

Monaco’s tight, twisty nature meant the chances of 2021’s title protagonists going wheel to wheel for a fifth straight race were always slim. And they all but disappeared when Hamilton’s struggles to warm the tyres to their best operating window on the smooth track with its slow turns left him seventh on the grid, five spots behind Verstappen. For once, Bottas was managing the tyres best at Mercedes.

Hamilton was then mired in the pack for the entire race. Two weeks after a brilliantly bold strategy call got him the Spanish GP win, this

“IF WE’D STAYED OUT LONGER, MAYBE GASLY WOULDN’T HAVE PITTED, MAYBE HE WOULD HAVE. WHO KNOWS?”

time Mercedes’ decision backfired. The world champion had tracked Gasly across the first stint, only briefly getting within a second of the AlphaTauri driver’s fifth place. By lap 29, when Hamilton stopped, Mercedes had become sufficiently worried that Gasly would be “a roadblock forever”, in the words of Allison, that it opted to drop Hamilton into the 16s gap that had formed between Perez and Antonio Giovinazzi. The team was trying to undercut Gasly, but its choice meant “the world did fall on our heads”, according to Allison.

That was the figurative summary of what occurred after Gasly had been able to pit one lap later and retain his place, as Hamilton struggled to fire the hards up to temperature. One lap further still, Vettel came in and his efforts to reach the low 1m16s ended up being good enough to jump the two cars he’d trailed. Then Perez’s trio of high 1m14s/low 1m15s popped him in front of all three, and Hamilton was left immensely frustrated. “I don’t really have much of a reaction,” he said of Mercedes’ strategy afterwards. “Just looking at it, if we’d stayed out longer, maybe Gasly wouldn’t have pitted, maybe he would have. Who knows? I don’t really have a feeling towards it.”

For once, not being in the thick of a fight for the win gifted Hamilton the chance to chase the fastest lap bonus point, so he stopped for a second time on lap 67. He switched back to used softs, which he took to a new track record of 1m12.909s.

That meant Hamilton left Monaco trailing Verstappen by four points in the drivers’ standings, the Red Bull driver leading a championship for the first time in his car racing career. That alone is a more intriguing narrative than the final, eventual tale of Monaco 2021, a race robbed of its engaging pre-event potential, with Leclerc taking pole for the first time since Mexico 2019, one that he would never ultimately reach. ❧



Hamilton frustrated at being stuck in the midfield throughout

NEXT F1 REPORT

AZERBAIJAN GRAND PRIX 10 JUNE ISSUE

Can Red Bull bolster its advantage, or will Mercedes hit back? And what chance a wild card winner in Baku?

Aston Martin scores big with strategy

Aston Martin made bold and successful strategy calls in Monaco to move Sebastian Vettel and Lance Stroll up from their grid spots and secure a double points finish.

Stroll, dumped out in Q2 and 13th on the grid, made a good start to clear Daniel Ricciardo and immediately challenged Esteban Ocon for 10th. Alpine opted to pit Ocon quite late in the pit cycle, lap 37, and put him on the medium tyre to close the gap to Stroll, who'd started on the hard Pirelli.

It worked for a time, as the Frenchman homed in and got the deficit down to around 13-14s, which meant that Aston Martin had to exercise patience. But after Ocon had taken the best from his tyres, Stroll could lap faster once more. He was able to open the gap to around 22s, and this gave him the chance to pit and stay ahead, which he did at the end of lap 58.

Vettel also benefited from an 'overcut'. He leapfrogged Lewis Hamilton and Pierre Gasly, dispatching the AlphaTauri driver at Massenet in a move Gasly labelled as "hard but fair", as the German began his out-lap.



COATES
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IMAGES

Poor weekend for Monaco winners Alonso, Ricciardo

Daniel Ricciardo and Fernando Alonso have three Monaco Grand Prix victories between them, but they factored little in this year's race, and neither scored points.

Three years on from his famous redemptive win, Ricciardo slumped to his worst Monaco finish since retiring from the race in 2013, his McLaren crossing the line a disappointing 12th. He failed to record a top-10 finish in any practice or qualifying session and was eliminated in Q2, lapping over half a second off team-mate Lando Norris.

"I'm probably more confused than frustrated," Ricciardo said after qualifying. "I'm sure Lando's fast, but I refuse to believe he's half a second quicker around here, and I don't mean to say that against him."

Things got little better for Ricciardo in the race as he struggled on the medium tyre early on, losing places to Kimi Raikkonen and Lance Stroll at the first corner. He was later ignominiously lapped by Norris, completed with a small wave from the young Briton.

"I was kind of like 'hands up in the air, like what do you do?'" Ricciardo said of being lapped. "This is the weekend that it is, and I was so far removed from thinking that the result was going to be good. Being lapped in general by anyone doesn't feel good."

McLaren team principal Andreas Seidl explained that the car required a "special driving style" that was "not natural" for Ricciardo, but made clear that the team will do all it can to aid his adjustment.

Ricciardo was followed home by 2006 and 2007 Monaco winner Alonso, who was knocked out in Q1 as he struggled for grip in his Alpine. He passed two cars in the opening turns, but could progress little further, turning the race into something of an extended test session en route to 13th.

"We experimented a little bit with a few things on the car," Alonso said, "changing things on the steering wheel, just to gather information. But it was a disappointing weekend. We were expecting more."

BIG NUMBER

0/5

Charles Leclerc's finishing record in his home city of Monaco. The run stretches back to his victorious Formula 2 season in 2017, when he led the feature race from pole before losing out during a safety car and then retiring with suspension damage.



Mazepin beats Schumacher amid struggles for Haas

Nikita Mazepin recorded his first head-to-head win over Haas team-mate Mick Schumacher in Monaco, as the reigning Formula 2 champion endured a tough weekend.

After hitting the barrier at Massenet in FP2, Schumacher crashed heavily at Casino Square in final practice, which ruled him out of qualifying. Haas team boss Gunther Steiner estimated the crash damage was

worth up to \$500,000.

Schumacher battled past Mazepin on the opening lap, but gave up the position before their pitstops when a suspected fuel pressure pick-up issue cost him more than 20 seconds.

Schumacher made up time on Mazepin in the second half of the race, crossing the line less than two seconds behind the Russian as the Haases finished 17th and 18th, three laps down on winner Max Verstappen.



Strong showing for revised Alfa

Alfa Romeo had a new floor for Monaco (see page 29) and looked in good form going into qualifying.

Both drivers ended practice seemingly with the chance of reaching Q3, which Antonio Giovinazzi duly delivered on. He qualified 10th, beating Esteban Ocon to the final spot in the top-10 shootout.

Although Giovinazzi kept ahead of Ocon after battling at Mirabeau on lap one, the Italian was 'overcut' in the pitstops by the Alpine driver and emerged on Ocon's tail. From there, Giovinazzi harried Ocon throughout the second half of the race, spending his time within a second of the Frenchman. But with little opportunity to pass, Giovinazzi was unable to mount an assault to try to reclaim ninth place. Nonetheless, his point opened Alfa's account for 2021.

Kimi Raikkonen missed the Q3 cut, qualifying 14th, but benefited from Daniel Ricciardo's timid start to shuffle up a place. After starting on the medium tyres, Raikkonen went deep into the race and frustrated the beleaguered McLaren driver, prompting Ricciardo to try to enact an undercut.

But the Finn stuck to the plan and, after performing his own stop on lap 43, emerged ahead of Ricciardo and kept him behind to the finish. Raikkonen was then able to cement a solid 11th place to come home behind his team-mate and cap a strong day for Alfa.

Q & A

GEORGE RUSSELL WILLIAMS DRIVER



How was your race?

It was pretty tough. We finished where we expected. So, there was nothing too interesting. The first stint was really difficult stuck behind Daniel Ricciardo and Fernando Alonso, really struggling for pace for whatever reason. As a consequence, I had damaged the tyres a lot, which made me pit early, then I came back out into traffic. So that was sort of a knock-on effect. But we showed signs of strong pace when we came out of the pits on the hard tyres. But as soon as we got the

blue flags, we're losing tyre temperature so not much we can do.

Better or worse than you expected?

About as we expected. We know we've got quite a sensitive car, and that doesn't induce a huge amount of confidence. And confidence is everything around a track like this. So, I think it was a pretty dull race overall and from my side, there was nothing too spectacular going on. It was just a race on my own looking in my mirrors for the blue flags.

How did you find the blue flags?

It's incredibly difficult. And

when you back off, you lose all the tyre temperature and then you've got no grip. It's a bit of a nightmare really. So yeah, out of all the places this is the worst place to have a bad car and a slow one. It was tough for me, but I don't envy the Haas guys. That was us two years ago! I had a sort of 10-lap period where Perez came out of the pits behind me and I think we were actually quicker than him, I was just in the groove. But I could just push on, almost as if I was leading the race and you just get in that rhythm and you just start flying. But then as soon as you've got these quicker cars coming up behind you, you lose your focus, you lose your rhythm.



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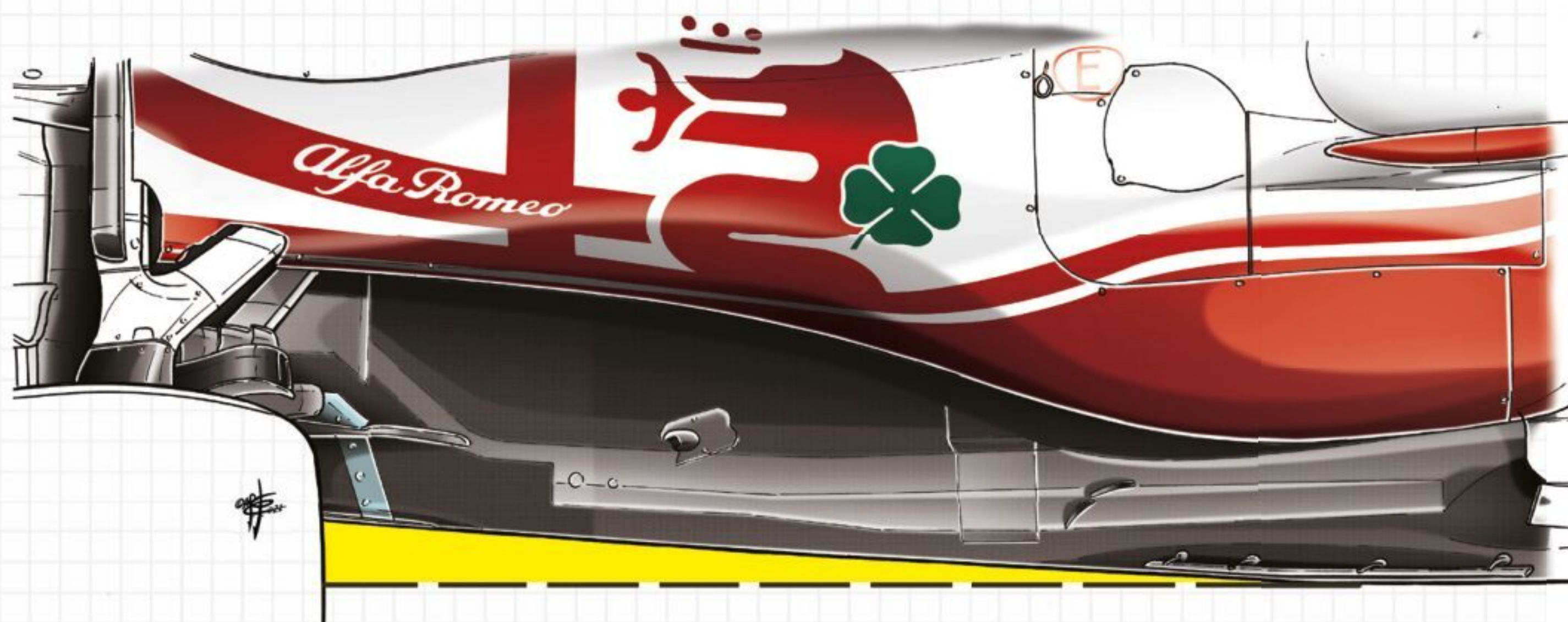
GIORGIO PIOLA

FLOOR CUT-OUT HELPS RAISE ALFA ROMEO'S GAME

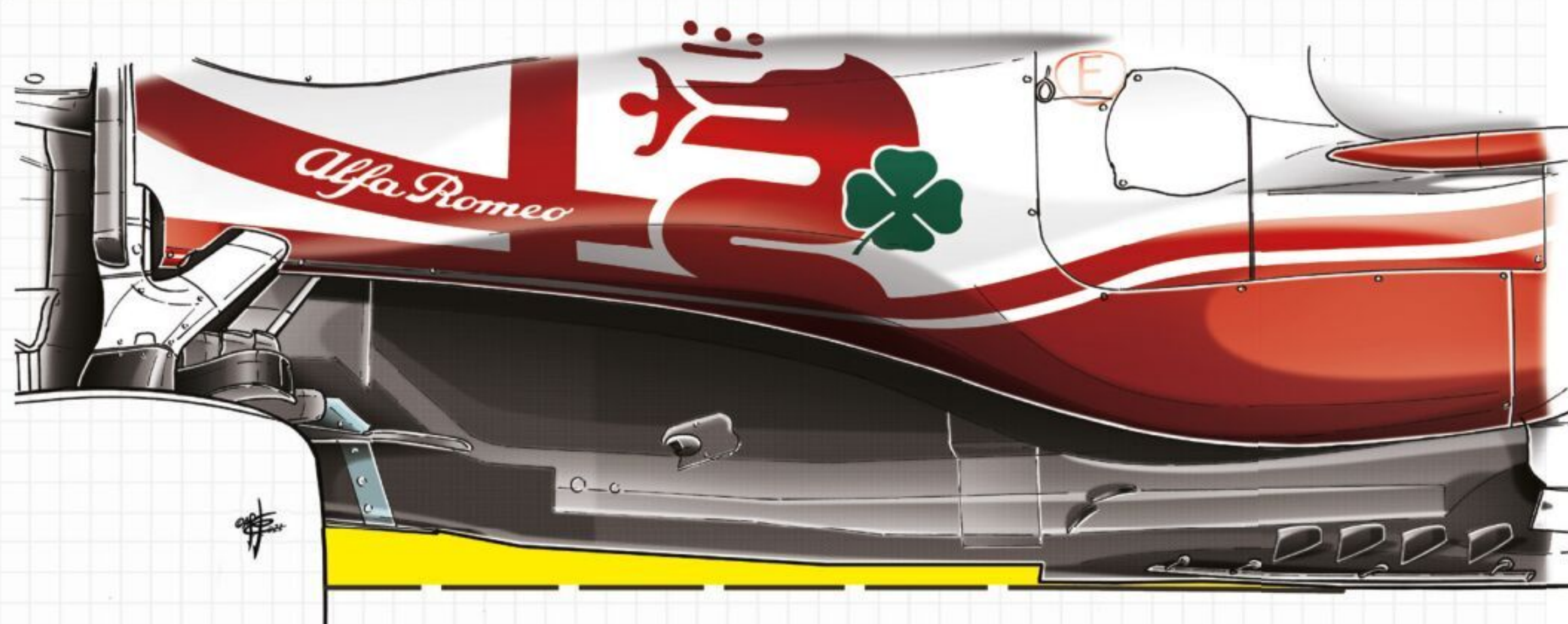
Alfa Romeo bagged its first point of 2021 courtesy of Antonio Giovinazzi's run to 10th in the Monaco Grand Prix, with the Italian making it all the way to Q3 as the C41 looked particularly handy on the streets of Monte Carlo. This was in part aided by a new floor, and Alfa has become the latest team to convert to the Z-shaped edge. This dispenses with a greater portion of the floor, but allows the team the chance to produce a vortex from the exposed corner that rolls along the edge of the tapered part of the floor and assists the efficiency of the diffuser.

Alfa already had two outwashing fins in this part of the floor, and these can now work with that exposed corner to provide the right placement for its desired aero patterns. The team has also added four further fins forward of that, which work with the curled-up lip towards the front of the floor. This area, when the car is in yaw, yields a little more mid-corner downforce to ensure that the tyres are loaded correctly because the diffuser will be significantly less effective at this stage. The rest of the floor seems to be in a similar specification to that run previously, so Alfa has got the new cut-out to work in a tried-and-tested format.

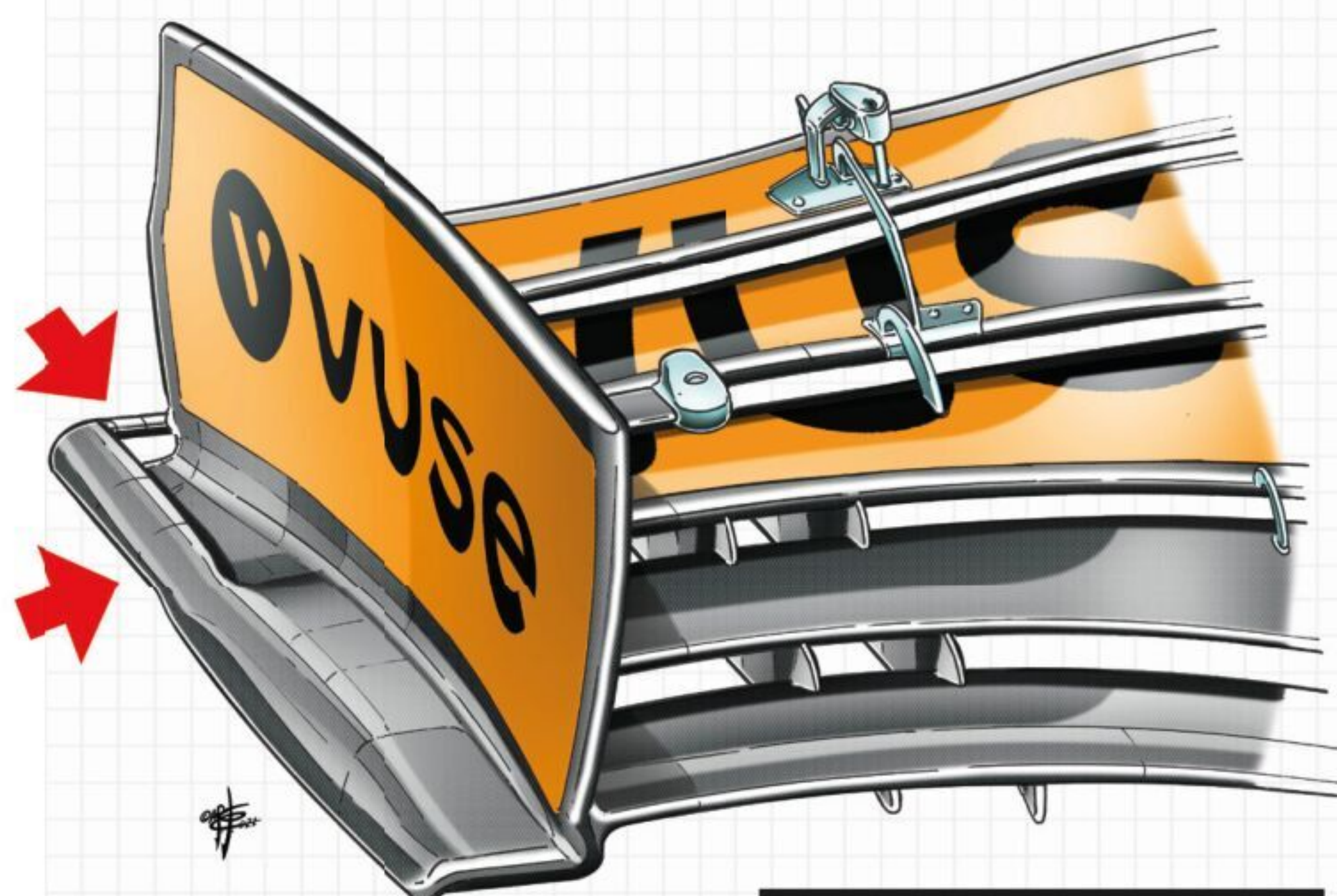
JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



**NEW FLOOR (BELOW)
HAS Z-SHAPED EDGE
AND FOUR EXTRA FINS**



McLAREN UPDATES CONTINUE WITH ENDPLATE TWEAK



**HORIZONTAL SLOT ADDED,
WHILE FOOTPLATE CURLS UPWARDS**

Resplendent in its Gulf colours, McLaren had a fine weekend with one car and a forgettable one with the other. Lando Norris was able to bat away the advances of Sergio Perez to secure a second podium of the year, while Daniel Ricciardo was mired in the midfield.

McLaren played with a minor update to its front wing, having been steadily developing its MCL35M throughout the opening five races. A further development of an endplate philosophy it has run since last year, the part now features an additional horizontal slot at the back. McLaren's footplate design curls up more

towards the trailing edge of the wing, fed by a longitudinal slot that helps air twist up into a vortex. This horizontal slot at the back now seems to help to release that vortex around the front tyres, strengthening the outwash effect that draws turbulence from the front tyres away from the car.

Like a number of other teams on the grid, McLaren also moved to a Z-shaped floor earlier in the season and has a bargeboard package that wouldn't be out of place on a window. It seems that, despite being strongly rooted in last year's car, the MCL35M has enjoyed lots of development potential.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

20 Schumacher #47

No Q1 time

19 Mazepin #9

1m12.958s

18 Latifi #6

1m12.366s

17 Alonso #14

1m12.205s

16 Tsunoda #22

1m12.096s

15 Russell #63

1m11.830s

14 Raikkonen #7

1m11.642s

13 Stroll #18

1m11.600s

12 Ricciardo #3

1m11.598s

11 Ocon #31

1m11.486s

FREE PRACTICE 1			FREE PRACTICE 2			FREE PRACTICE 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Perez	1m12.487s	1	Leclerc	1m11.684s	1	Verstappen	1m11.294s
2	Sainz	1m12.606s	2	Sainz	1m11.796s	2	Sainz	1m11.341s
3	Verstappen	1m12.648s	3	Hamilton	1m12.074s	3	Leclerc	1m11.552s
4	Gasly	1m12.929s	4	Verstappen	1m12.081s	4	Bottas	1m11.765s
5	Hamilton	1m12.995s	5	Bottas	1m12.107s	5	Perez	1m11.817s
6	Bottas	1m13.131s	6	Norris	1m12.379s	6	Norris	1m11.988s
7	Norris	1m13.236s	7	Gasly	1m12.498s	7	Hamilton	1m12.020s
8	Vettel	1m13.732s	8	Perez	1m12.708s	8	Raikkonen	1m12.298s
9	Tsunoda	1m13.746s	9	Giovinazzi	1m12.746s	9	Gasly	1m12.357s
10	Raikkonen	1m14.081s	10	Vettel	1m12.982s	10	Vettel	1m12.537s
11	Stroll	1m14.090s	11	Raikkonen	1m13.065s	11	Giovinazzi	1m12.539s
12	Giovinazzi	1m14.106s	12	Alonso	1m13.175s	12	Stroll	1m12.700s
13	Alonso	1m14.205s	13	Stroll	1m13.195s	13	Ricciardo	1m12.959s
14	Latifi	1m14.268s	14	Ocon	1m13.199s	14	Schumacher	1m13.139s
15	Ricciardo	1m14.281s	15	Ricciardo	1m13.257s	15	Alonso	1m13.329s
16	Ocon	1m14.320s	16	Russell	1m13.509s	16	Mazepin	1m13.390s
17	Mazepin	1m14.616s	17	Latifi	1m13.593s	17	Russell	1m13.447s
18	Schumacher	1m14.801s	18	Mazepin	1m14.407s	18	Latifi	1m13.475s
19	Russell	1m14.840s	19	Schumacher	1m14.416s	19	Tsunoda	1m13.522s
20	Leclerc	1m19.618s	20	Tsunoda	1m14.829s	20	Ocon	1m13.614s

WEATHER Sunny, air 20-22C track 38-41C

WEATHER Sunny air 22-24C track 45-51C

WEATHER Overcast, air 17-18C track 27-30C

SPEED TRAP (QUALIFYING)

McLaren

178.7mph

Aston Martin

177.8mph

Mercedes

177.7mph

Williams

177.1mph

Ferrari

176.4mph

Alfa Romeo

176.3mph

Haas

176.0mph

Red Bull

175.9mph

AlphaTauri

175.6mph

Alpine

174.6mph

QUALIFYING 1			QUALIFYING 2			QUALIFYING 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m10.938s	1	Leclerc	1m10.597s	1	Leclerc	1m10.346s
2	Leclerc	1m11.113s	2	Verstappen	1m10.650s	2	Verstappen	1m10.576s
3	Verstappen	1m11.124s	3	Bottas	1m10.695s	3	Bottas	1m10.601s
4	Norris	1m11.321s	4	Sainz	1m10.806s	4	Sainz	1m10.611s
5	Sainz	1m11.324s	5	Perez	1m11.019s	5	Norris	1m10.620s
6	Gasly	1m11.560s	6	Norris	1m11.031s	6	Gasly	1m10.900s
7	Hamilton	1m11.622s	7	Hamilton	1m11.116s	7	Hamilton	1m11.095s
8	Perez	1m11.644s	8	Gasly	1m11.179s	8	Vettel	1m11.419s
9	Giovinazzi	1m11.658s	9	Vettel	1m11.309s	9	Perez	1m11.573s
10	Ocon	1m11.740s	10	Giovinazzi	1m11.409s	10	Giovinazzi	1m11.779s
11	Ricciardo	1m11.747s	11	Ocon	1m11.486s			
12	Raikkonen	1m11.899s	12	Ricciardo	1m11.598s			
13	Stroll	1m11.979s	13	Stroll	1m11.600s			
14	Russell	1m12.016s	14	Raikkonen	1m11.642s			
15	Vettel	1m12.078s	15	Russell	1m11.830s			
16	Tsunoda	1m12.096s						
17	Alonso	1m12.205s						
18	Latifi	1m12.366s						
19	Mazepin	1m12.958s						
20	Schumacher	no time						

WEATHER Overcast, air 18-21C track 29-35C

NEXT RACE

6 JUNE

AZERBAIJAN GP

Baku

SEASON STATS			
DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Verstappen	105	1	1
2 Hamilton	101	1	1
3 Norris	56	3	5
4 Bottas	47	3	1
5 Perez	44	4	2
6 Leclerc	40	4	1
7 Sainz	38	2	4
8 Ricciardo	24	6	6
9 Gasly	16	6	5
10 Ocon	12	7	5
11 Vettel	10	5	8
12 Stroll	9	8	10
13 Alonso	5	8	9
14 Tsunoda	2	9	13
15 Giovinazzi	1	10	10
16 Raikkonen	0	11	14
17 Russell	0	14	11
18 Latifi	0	15	14
19 Schumacher	0	16	18
20 Mazepin	0	17	19

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP	
1 Red Bull	149
2 Mercedes	148
3 McLaren	80
4 Ferrari	78
5 Aston Martin	19
6 AlphaTauri	18
7 Alpine	17
8 Alfa Romeo	1
9 Williams	0
10 Haas	0

QUALIFYING BATTLE			
Hamilton	3	2	Bottas
Perez	1	4	Verstappen
Ricciardo	3	2	Norris
Vettel	2	3	Stroll
Alonso	1	4	Ocon
Leclerc	4	1	Sainz
Gasly	5	0	Tsunoda
Raikkonen	1	4	Giovinazzi
Mazepin	1	4	Schumacher
Latifi	0	5	Russell
Scores ignore sessions if a driver didn't participate in qualifying or had a serious technical problem			

WINS		POLE POSITIONS	
Hamilton	3	Hamilton	2
Verstappen	2	Bottas	1
		Leclerc	1
		Verstappen	1

FASTEST LAPS	
Bottas	2
Hamilton	2
Verstappen	1

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STARTING GRID

10 Giovinazzi #99 1m11.779s	9 Perez #11 1m11.573s	8 Vettel #5 1m11.419s	7 Hamilton #44 1m11.095s	6 Gasly #10 1m10.900s	5 Norris #4 1m10.620s	4 Sainz #55 1m10.611s	3 Bottas #77 1m10.601s	2 Verstappen #33 1m10.576s	1 Leclerc #16 1m10.346s
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RACE RESULTS ROUND 5/23 (78 LAPS - 161.74 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISHTIME	LED	TYRES
1	Max Verstappen (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda	1h38m56.820s	78	Su, Hn
2	Carlos Sainz Jr (ESP)	Ferrari	+8.968s		Su, Hn
3	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	+19.427s		Su, Hn
4	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Red Bull-Honda	+20.490s		Su, Hn
5	Sebastian Vettel (DEU)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+52.591s		Su, Hn
6	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	AlphaTauri-Honda	+53.896s		Su, Hn
7	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	+1m08.231s		Su, Hn, Su
8	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	-1 lap		Hn, Sn
9	Esteban Ocon (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	-1 lap		Sn, Mn
10	Antonio Giovinazzi (ITA)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap		Su, Hn
11	Kimi Raikkonen (FIN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap		Mn, Hn
12	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	-1 lap		Mn, Hn
13	Fernando Alonso (ESP)	Alpine-Renault	-1 lap		Mn, Sn
14	George Russell (GBR)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap		Mn, Hn
15	Nicholas Latifi (CAN)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap		Mn, Hn
16	Yuki Tsunoda (JPN)	AlphaTauri-Honda	-1 lap		Hn, Sn
17	Nikita Mazepin (RUS)	Haas-Ferrari	-3 laps		Sn, Hn
18	Mick Schumacher (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	-3 laps		Sn, Hn
R	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Mercedes	29 laps-wheel		Su
NS	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	driveshaft		Su

FASTEST LAPS

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Hamilton	1m12.909s	-	69
2	Tsunoda	1m14.037s	+1.128s	66
3	Perez	1m14.552s	+1.643s	32
4	Ricciardo	1m14.578s	+1.669s	43
5	Sainz	1m14.621s	+1.712s	35
6	Verstappen	1m14.649s	+1.740s	58
7	Norris	1m14.670s	+1.761s	76
8	Stroll	1m14.674s	+1.765s	74
9	Raikkonen	1m14.971s	+2.062s	55
10	Alonso	1m15.026s	+2.117s	70
11	Vettel	1m15.316s	+2.407s	33
12	Ocon	1m15.316s	+2.407s	41
13	Giovinazzi	1m15.331s	+2.422s	41
14	Gasly	1m15.412s	+2.503s	71
15	Russell	1m15.539s	+2.630s	59
16	Latifi	1m15.573s	+2.664s	66
17	Bottas	1m15.706s	+2.797s	18
18	Schumacher	1m16.425s	+3.516s	51
19	Mazepin	1m16.866s	+3.957s	64
-	Leclerc	no time	-	-

WEATHER Sunny, air 21-22C track 33-43C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 98.08mph **FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED** 102.39mph

TYRES

KEY: H - Hard M - Medium S - Soft I - Intermediate W - Wet n - New set u - Used set



RACE BRIEFING

GRID PENALTIES

SCHUMACHER

Five-place penalty for replacement gearbox

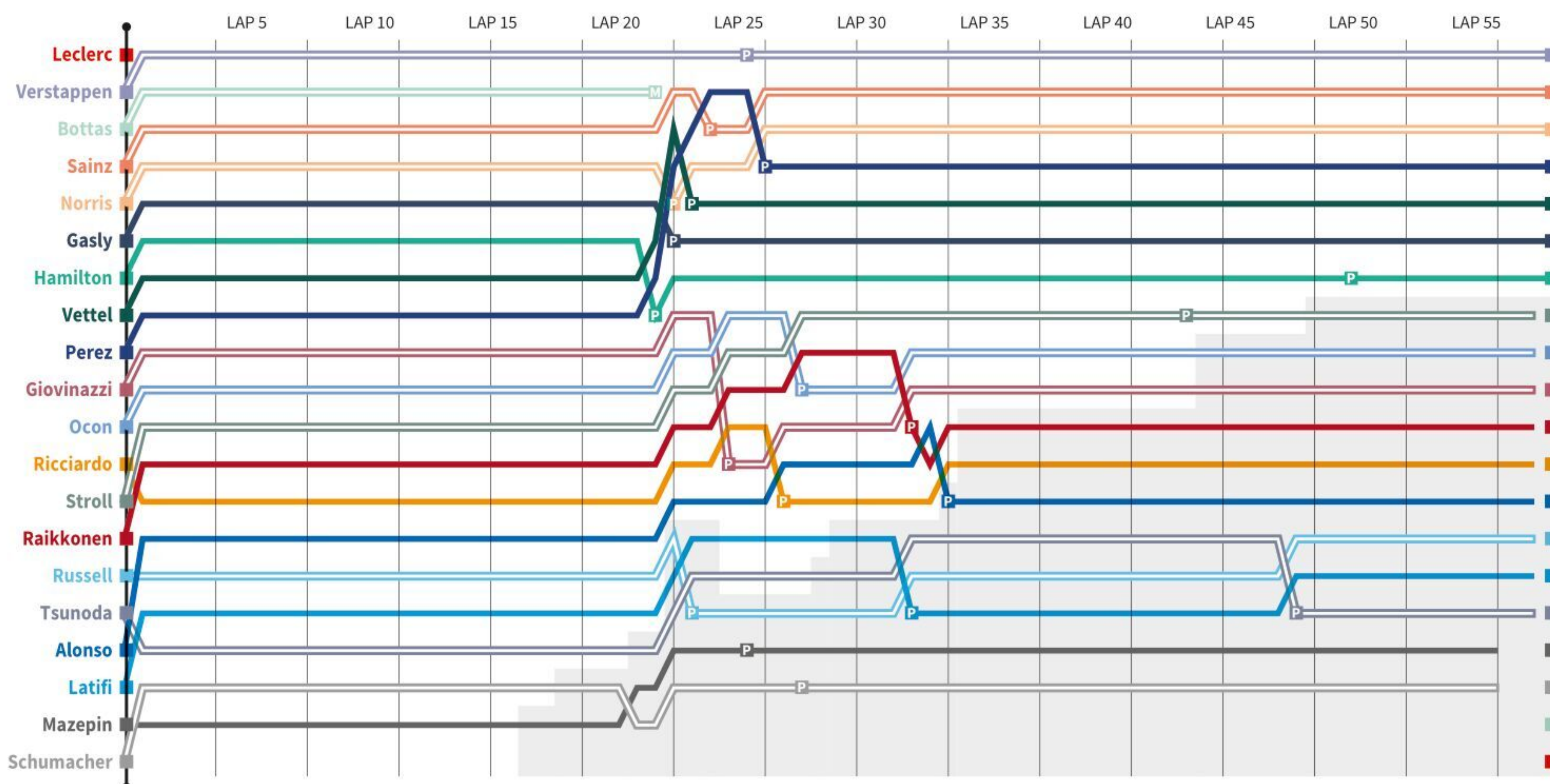
STAT
12

Verstappen's 12th F1 win equals Mario Andretti, Alan Jones and Carlos Reutemann

STAT
7

Seventh was Hamilton's worst qualifying result since the 2018 German GP

LAP CHART What happened, when



P Pitstop C Crash M Mechanical failure S Spin H Penalty L Car lapped Y Safety car

PEERLESS VETTEL SHOWS HIS METTLE FOR A MAXIMUM SCORE

The four-time world champion is the only driver to merit a perfect 10 in Monaco, while it's Ricciardo's turn to take the wooden spoon

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

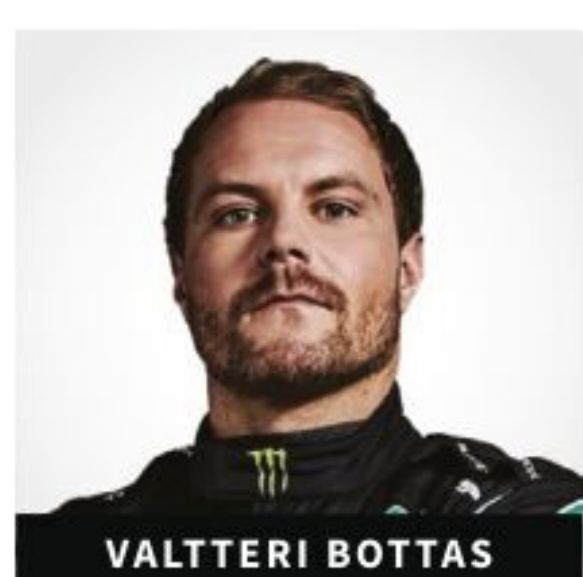
MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

Started **6th** — Result **7th**

5 Considering Mercedes had the pace to steal pole despite its tyre warm-up issues, qualifying seventh and finishing there adds up to an underwhelming weekend. Hamilton's race was one of frustration as the team picked the wrong option trying to undercut Gasly, but at least he got fastest lap.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

Started **2nd** — Result **R**

7 Not hooking up his best sectors on his first Q3 run cost a possible pole, as failing to do so meant he missed out when Leclerc crashed. Still, he dealt with tyre warm-up issue better than Hamilton, which helps his score. Launched well but was cut off by Verstappen, then suffered cruel luck again in the pits.

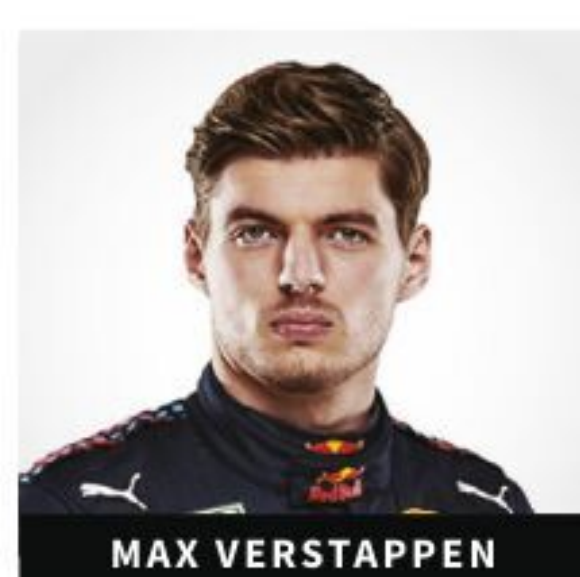
RED BULL



SERGIO PEREZ

Started **8th** — Result **4th**

7 Going forwards from your Monaco grid spot is challenging, which is reflected in Perez's score, despite his latest qualifying disappointment. Raced excellently to make his overcut strategy work, setting a string of fastest laps to jump Vettel, Hamilton and Gasly, then harry Norris.



MAX VERSTAPPEN

Started **1st** — Result **1st**

9 Considering he'd just gone fastest in the first sector and was up on his previous best lap when Leclerc crashed, was firmly in the hunt for pole. He missed it, and a maximum score here, for trailing after the first banker Q3 runs, which left him exposed. Defended well at the start and controlled the race.

McLAREN



DANIEL RICCIARDO

Started **11th** — Result **12th**

3 A really disappointing weekend, with a race he called "painful". The main reason for the low score is being lapped by his team-mate, who took an identical car to the podium. Couldn't close the gap to Raikkonen after being too timid at Sainte Devote and falling behind the Alfa.



LANDO NORRIS

Started **4th** — Result **3rd**

9 Considering McLaren had the fourth fastest car, outqualifying Hamilton's Mercedes and a Red Bull, and then hanging onto take a podium means he must score highly. Norris's struggle on the hards was down to losing confidence following the switch to the tricky hardest compound.

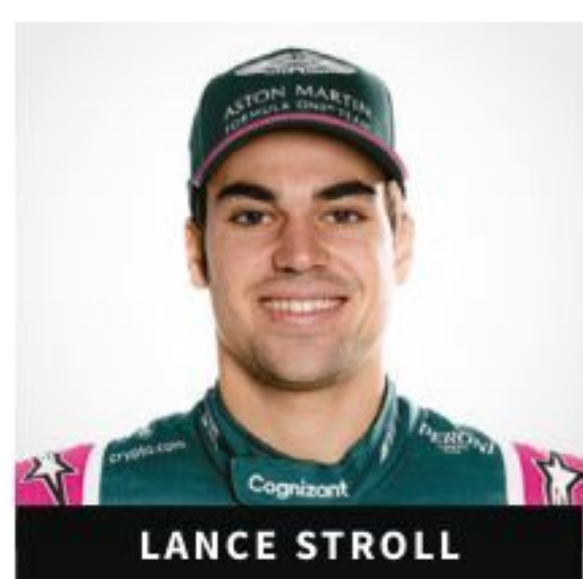
ASTON MARTIN



SEBASTIAN VETTEL

Started **7th** — Result **5th**

10 Made Q3 in a car that isn't guaranteed to get there, and beat several faster rivals. His nous to save his tyres during the early laps and then execute a brilliant overcut to leap past Gasly (who he bravely defied on the run up the hill after his stop) and Hamilton brings him the maximum.



LANCE STROLL

Started **12th** — Result **8th**

7 Q2 exit was put down to his car balance going off and hitting traffic. Gained four 'real' places in the race by making the contra-strategy work – he took the hards to lap 58 before pitting. Pace in clear air once Giovinazzi and Ocon had stopped ahead of him meant he was able to overcut them.

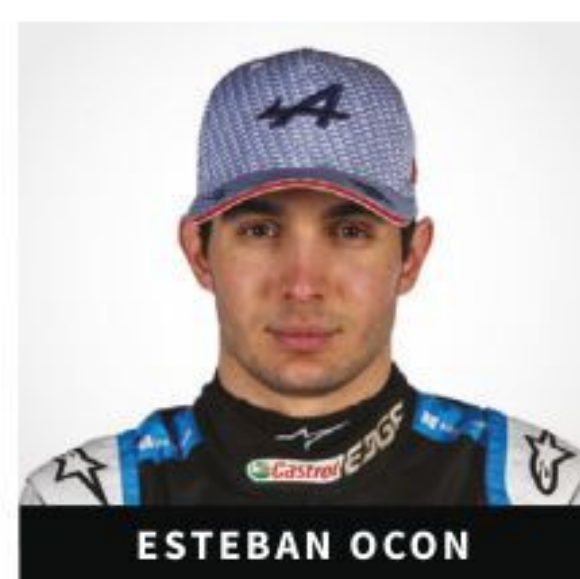
ALPINE



FERNANDO ALONSO

Started **16th** — Result **13th**

5 This score is mainly down to his Q1 exit, which ultimately cost the chance to take the points finish Ocon claimed. Struggling for tyre temperature and hitting traffic were cited as reasons behind his qualifying result, but he managed to jump Tsunoda off the line, then edge Russell at Massenet.



ESTEBAN OCON

Started **10th** — Result **9th**

8 Got knocked out in Q2, but qualifying 11th was still solid given the car's eighth-best pace. Leapt ahead of Giovinazzi off the line, then got mugged by the Alfa around the outside of Mirabeau. Managed to overcut Giovinazzi at the stops, then referenced coping with several issues to finish.

FERRARI



CHARLES LECLERC

Started **NS** — Result **N/A**

4 Had he started and gone on to win, his score would've doubled (*at least!* – ed). But, although Ferrari claimed the driveshaft damage wasn't due to his Q3 crash, it couldn't say so for certain, which means he pays again for the error after being denied a chance to claim a home win.



CARLOS SAINZ JR

Started **3rd** — Result **2nd**

8 Very close to getting one mark higher. Even though he insisted he could have got pole were it not for Leclerc's crash, he'd just slipped behind his team-mate come Q1, having looked the faster Ferrari driver by a shade. That left him vulnerable to the Q3 circumstances that played out.



ALPHATAURI



Started 5th — Result 6th

9 Another excellent drive. Didn't quite string his best lap together in Q3, but still wouldn't have climbed higher if he had. Did excellently to negate Hamilton's undercut, but out-lap tyre temperature struggles left him *just* on the wrong side of Vettel as the Aston exited the pits.



Started 15th - Result 16th

4 A tough one to score given he'd never previously raced in Monaco, but his team-mate's result demonstrated the car's pace. Team felt being called to the weighbridge led to his Q1 exit. Did what he could on the alternative strategy, running longest of all on the hards, but couldn't repass Latifi.

ALFA ROMEO



Started 13th - Result 11th

7 Lost confidence chasing the tyre operating window, but still made it through to Q2. It's the gap to his team-mate's overall weekend result that's reflected in their scores, as that showed what the car could do. Took advantage of Ricciardo's poor Turn 1 to take the only place he gained on merit.



Started 9th — Result 10th

9 Actually finished behind a fractionally slower car, but still had a mighty weekend. Made Q3, and, had he recreated his Q2 time, he'd have started eighth. Bolshy on lap one, then got overcut by Ocon after getting briefly caught behind Ricciardo when rejoining after his stop.

HAAS



Started 18th - Result 17th

4 Considering his team-mate's problems, finishing just 1.5s ahead represents a poor result. Mazepin got mugged by Schumacher on lap one and then fell away from his team-mate in the race's first quarter. Only caught back up and was waved past due to Schumacher's power issue.



Started 19th - Result 18th

4 Can't score higher because of his FP3 crash, which cost the chance to qualify and replicate his 14th in final practice, and did up to £500,000 worth of damage. Made a bold start to the race to pass his team-mate at the hairpin, but was undone by a loss of power caused by a fuel pick-up problem.

WILLIAMS



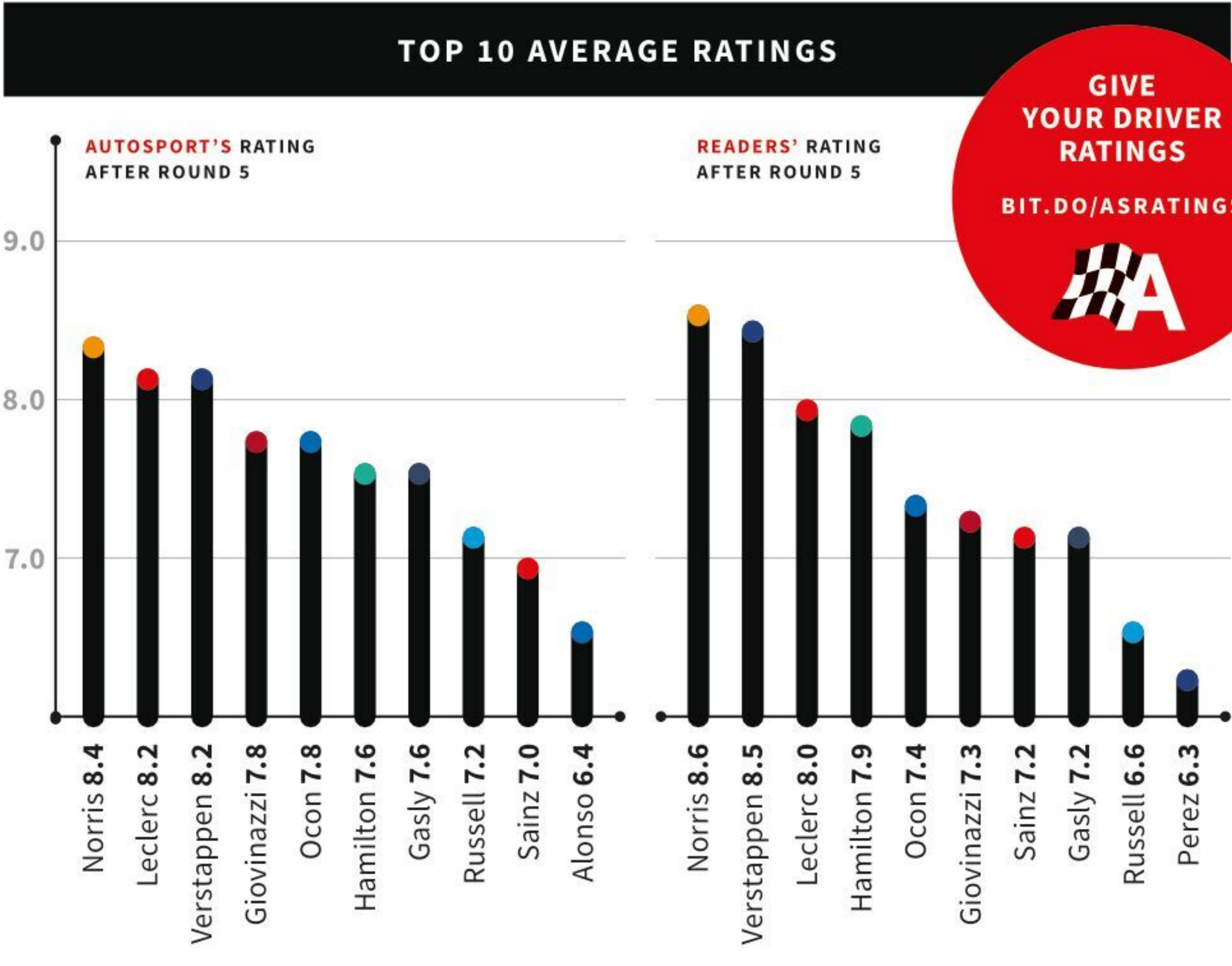
Started 17th - Result 15th

7 Loses out compared to his team-mate for failing to make Q2, but did at least make progress in the race by beating Tsunoda. Made an important move to get ahead of the AlphaTauri by outdragging it up the hill on lap one, then shadowed Russell for the rest of the race.



Started 14th - Result 14th

8 Delivered the maximum Williams was expecting by extending his Q2 appearance streak and then maintaining his inherited 14th (from Leclerc's absence) to the finish. Found the race "pretty tough" as he chased Ricciardo and Alonso after being edged out by the Alpine on lap one.



Evans has
closed to within
two points of
team-mate Ogier's
lead in the
WRC table



Evans makes the most of Hyundai's collapse

At one point the Korean manufacturer's cars held the top three positions. Then misfortune intervened, playing into the Toyota man's hands

NICK GARTON

PHOTOGRAPHY MCKLEIN



Three days of drama heralded the return of the World Rally Championship's most charismatic event: Rally Portugal. They ended in victory for Elfyn Evans, allowing the Welshman to revitalise his 2021 campaign while his Toyota team seized the initiative in the manufacturers' standings.

Rain had been a major feature of the recce days, and the action got under way on Friday morning with plenty of mist in the hills. Temperatures were brisk and put a premium on soft-compound rubber to exact the maximum grip from the gravel. This already meant that a joker was being played, because championship tyre supplier Pirelli was only authorised to issue each car with eight soft-compound tyres to last for the whole event, with an additional 24 hard-compound tyres.

With conditions likely to remain changeable, the form book made it hard to bet against Toyota after Hyundai had fumbled its tyre choices on two of the three events so far in 2021. During the three weeks that had been available to him since the preceding round in Croatia, Hyundai team principal Andrea Adamo needed to perform a forensic inspection of where and how his squad has repeatedly found itself exposed to error when making a judgement call on tyres. Portugal was ready to give whatever repair work that Adamo had done a rigorous test. But unusually, the Hyundai, Toyota and M-Sport Ford crews had all gone the same way: four of the soft compound, with one hard tyre as their spare.

After the first 12.35km stage at Lousa, the Hyundais stood in formation at the top of the times. Thierry Neuville held third, Dani Sordo second, and Ott Tanak led despite a half-spin and a recurrence of Hyundai's other long-standing bugbear: an engine that stalls in low-speed corners. The three i20

Coupes were within half a second of each other, and this was testament to the commitment being shown by Neuville in particular, second on the road and therefore sweeping some of the worst gravel off the stage as he went. Only championship leader Sebastien Ogier had worse conditions to contend with as the first competitor through each stage, and Toyota's seven-time champion could only set the eighth fastest time, 5.1s down on Tanak's benchmark. As a measure of how well Neuville was going, his time was equalled by Gus Greensmith's M-Sport Fiesta, running on stages that he adores in a near-optimum eighth in the batting order.

Sordo, running ninth on the road in Hyundai's third entry, then used his advantageous position to full effect on the next stage and swept past Tanak into a 3.2s lead overall. Another Hyundai whitewash followed on the third stage, although by now both Neuville and Tanak were deploying their hard-compound tyres on the front wheels, switching from one side to the

“I try to not push so much because of the tyres, I don't know what we need to use again”

other between stages to try to avoid beating the life out of their softs.

On the final stage of the morning loop, Toyota finally grabbed its first stage win with Kalle Rovanpera, which allowed him to leapfrog M-Sport's Adrien Fourmaux into sixth overall. None of this troubled the



Hyundai crews, who by now had built a good cushion to Evans in fourth place at the halt. “I try to not push so much because of the tyres, I don't know what we need to use again,” said rally leader Sordo. “[When] the tyres are OK we push, when they are finished we'll see what we do!”

Ogier remained a spectator to all this and, with half of the first day gone, the prospect of being stuck in the sweeper's position for a second day was looming uncomfortably large. The Frenchman's worries were only mildly alleviated by Greensmith picking up a puncture and dropping more than 52s on the third stage, and Ogier was distinctly unhappy with his set-up after the first loop.

With the same stages repeated after the break, the Hyundais carried on serenely at the front, while Ogier got to work and posted the fifth fastest time on the next stage, his best performance so far. Then, on stage seven, Neuville's time as a factor in the rally came to a juddering halt when the Belgian suffered from an over-optimistic pacenote and ran wide on a tight left-hander, ripping the right-rear corner off his Hyundai. Neuville, attempting to three-wheel to the stage end, crawled along and threw up a veritable sandstorm behind him, into which Evans plunged after being the fastest man on the split times to that point.



Sordo was Hyundai's hero of the hour, although he had to settle for second

Much Welsh indignation was incurred as Evans was forced to sit, sightless, in Neuville's wake, and eventually the stewards gave the Toyota man a notional time equal to the fastest on the stage. And that was Ogier's time. As Neuville's car was retired, so Ogier began to conjure. While his stage win on Friday came at Evans's expense, everything else he achieved through the afternoon, dispatching Rovaniemi and closing to just 24s off the overnight lead, was straightforward brilliance.

Meanwhile at the front, there was a change in the order as Sordo's much-abused soft tyres gave up underneath him, combined with another nasty dose of Hyundai's low-speed engine stalling. Adding insult to injury, the right-rear tyre delaminated explosively during the drive to the day-ending superspecial at the Pista da Corsilha rallycross track in Porto, which cleaved the surrounding bodywork away with it. So it was that the rally leader on Friday night was a rather surprised Tanak, with Evans in second place (6s back) and Sordo recovering to hold third ahead of Takamoto Katsuta's Toyota and Ogier.

Saturday dawned warmer and mistier, with Neuville donning Cinderella's apron and dutifully clearing the road as penance for his Friday misdemeanours. Well... for »



First in the running order meant onerous road-sweeping for Ogier



Evans delighted to stand on the top step after keeping out of trouble



Katsuta could not hold
back Toyota team-mate
Ogier and finished fourth

a couple of stages, anyway. A mystery ailment then affected the bespectacled Wallonian's Hyundai on a road section before the final stage of the morning loop, which obliged him to drop out of first place on the road and take the sixth starting spot.

Any suggestions that this was a little bit of gamesmanship on Hyundai's part to get their man clear of road-sweeping duties (or at least from sweeping the road in front of the Toyotas), were answered by team principal Adamo with his tongue firmly in his cheek. "You overestimated me: I'm a poor Italian guy, immigrant in Germany, so I'm not so smart," he quipped. "I'm happy

that you think I'm so sophisticated."

Neuville's car was retired again, but Tanak was beginning to look impregnable. Coming out after service, the Estonian recorded his 250th career stage win, but then he all but replicated Neuville's Friday error and tore the right-rear corner off his car. In the space of 24 hours, Hyundai's rally had gone from a regal three-car procession at the head of the field to a single entry for Sordo, who was battling desperately to stay on terms with Evans.

Adamo's hard work in rebuilding his squad's fortunes lay in ruin through no fault of his own, and his instruction to Sordo was

simple: win. The day-ending superspecial on the quayside in Porto illustrated how keenly Sordo had taken that message to heart. In the space of just 3.3km he lopped a full 5.7s off Evans's advantage, leaving the Toyota man with just 10.7s in hand with five stages remaining. It was game on. Behind the flying Sordo, Ogier overpowered team-mate Katsuta to take third place, while Rovaniemi retired on the final road section of the day with an unspecified engine problem.

On Sunday, Sordo continued to give his all, but he was up against Evans in the sort of form that carried him to the cusp of the 2020 WRC title, and the Gwynedd star was not to be denied. Both Tanak and Neuville had soft tyres in hand, and sought to put them to use in the points-scoring powerstage, held on the iconic Fafe test, by trundling through the rest of Sunday's route to spare their rubber.

For his part, Tanak also dispensed with a spare wheel, saving himself 23kg, and even swapped from a full-face helmet to an open-face to save some extra grammes. The result was five points to Estonia, with Neuville second, but it did little to mollify Adamo as Toyota stretched its advantage to 37 points in the manufacturers' title race. Once again, the Hyundai boss could only heap praise upon Sordo for digging his team out of a hole. "He's like the Navy SEAL: he comes to rescue us when we need and he's always there," Adamo declared.

The victorious Evans, meanwhile, celebrated closing to within two points of the drivers' championship lead. "It feels good!" he said. "We perhaps weren't the fastest crew this weekend, but we had really good pace and kept out of trouble and obviously did enough to keep Dani at bay today. It comes at a good time, so I'm happy to take this one."



Neuville was flying
until he ripped off
his right-rear wheel

RESULTS ROUND 4/12, RALLY PORTUGAL, 20-23 MAY

POS	DRIVER / CO-DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Elfyn Evans (GBR) / Scott Martin (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	3h38m26.2s
2	Dani Sordo (ESP) / Borja Rozada (ESP)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+28.3s
3	Sebastien Ogier (FRA) / Julien Ingrassia (FRA)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	+1m23.6s
4	Takamoto Katsuta (JPN) / Daniel Barritt (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	+2m28.4s
5	Gus Greensmith (GBR) / Chris Patterson (GBR)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+4m52.7s
6	Adrien Fourmaux (FRA) / Renaud Jamoul (BEL)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+5m03.4s
7	Esapekka Lappi (FIN) / Janne Ferm (FIN)	Movisport SRL / Volkswagen Polo GTI R5	+9m37.2s
8	Teemu Suninen (FIN) / Mikko Markkula (FIN)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta Rally2	+11m20.0s
9	Mads Ostberg (NOR) / Torstein Eriksen (NOR)	TRT World Rally Team / Citroen C3 Rally2	+12m01.5s
10	Nikolay Gryazin (RUS) / Konstantin Aleksandrov (RUS)	Movisport SRL / Volkswagen Polo GTI R5	+12m35.8s
OTHERS			
21	Ott Tanak (EST) / Martin Jarveoja (EST)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+20m37.8s
22	Kalle Rovanpera (FIN) / Jonne Halttunen (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	+22m10.2s
36	Thierry Neuville (BEL) / Martijn Wydaeghe (BEL)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+59m24.1s
R	Pierre-Louis Loubet (FRA) / Florian Haut Labourdette (FRA)	Hyundai 2C Competition / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	SS2-engine



“He’s like the Navy SEAL: he comes to rescue us when we need and he’s always there”

The WRC2 field was depleted by positive COVID tests for two Norwegian stars: championship leader Andreas Mikkelsen and Hyundai driver Ole Christian Veiby. This left a battle between the Volkswagen Polos of Esapekka Lappi and Russian prodigy Nikolay Gryazin, the M-Sport Fiesta of Teemu Suninen, the Hyundai of the precocious Oliver Solberg, and the Citroen C3 of Mads Ostberg.

Initially, Ostberg and Lappi pulled clear of the field, but a puncture cost reigning class champion Ostberg dearly, and the Norwegian spent most of his weekend trying to get back on terms with Gryazin.

Solberg was entertainingly wild on his way up to third place. He even replicated his former world champion father Petter’s signature move by standing on a moving car and waving to the crowds after Friday’s superspecial. Ultimately he overcooked it on Saturday’s long stage, losing a minute while dangling two wheels over a precipice (luckily he was *in* the car at this point). This handed the charging Ostberg another shot at the podium, which he gratefully claimed behind eventual winner Lappi and Suninen.

In WRC3, the event was led almost throughout by championship leader Joann Rossel’s Citroen, but Kajetan Kajetanowicz’s Skoda just edged past him at the powerstage finish line, with Britain’s Chris Ingram scoring his first WRC2 podium in third. ❄

STAGE TIMES

STAGE	FASTEST	LEADER	SECOND
SS1 Lousa 1 (7.67 miles)	Tanak 9m04.7s	Tanak	Sordo +0.4s
SS2 Gois 1 (12.12 miles)	Sordo 12m59.0s	Sordo	Tanak +3.2s
SS3 Arganil 1 (11.69 miles)	Sordo 11m54.4s	Sordo	Tanak +6.7s
SS4 Lousa 2 (7.67 miles)	Rovanpera 9m02.6s	Sordo	Tanak +7.6s
SS5 Gois 2 (12.12 miles)	Sordo 13m04.4s	Sordo	Neuville +10.6s
SS6 Arganil 2 (11.69 miles)	Tanak 11m52.4s	Sordo	Neuville +8.2s
SS7 Mortagua (11.28 miles)	Ogier and Evans 11m42.7s	Tanak	Evans +2.7s
SS8 Lousada (2.09 miles)	Tanak 2m31.4s	Tanak	Evans +6.0s
SS9 Vieira do Minho 1 (12.83 miles)	Tanak 12m41.7s	Tanak	Evans +13.5s
SS10 Cabeceiras de Basto 1 (13.90 miles)	Tanak 13m33.7s	Tanak	Evans +18.3s
SS11 Amarante 1 (23.56 miles)	Tanak 24m11.9s	Tanak	Evans +19.2s
SS12 Vieira do Minho 2 (12.83 miles)	Evans 12m36.6s	Tanak	Evans +18.6s
SS13 Cabeceiras de Basto 2 (13.90 miles)	Tanak 13m36.4s	Tanak	Evans +22.4s
SS14 Amarante 2 (23.56 miles)	Evans 24m21.0s	Evans	Sordo +16.4s
SS15 Porto-Foz (2.05 miles)	Sordo 3m04.1s	Evans	Sordo +10.7s
SS16 Felgueiras 1 (5.70 miles)	Evans 6m05.1s	Evans	Sordo +20.3s
SS17 Montim (5.44 miles)	Evans 5m44.6s	Evans	Sordo +21.7s
SS18 Fafe 1 (6.95 miles)	Neuville 6m39.2s	Evans	Sordo +22.0s
SS19 Felgueiras 2 (5.70 miles)	Evans 6m03.7s	Evans	Sordo +26.2s
SS20 Fafe 2 (powerstage) (6.95 miles)	Tanak 6m27.2s	Evans	Sordo +28.3s

DRIVERS’ CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Ogier 79; 2 Evans 77; 3 Neuville 57; 4 Tanak 45; 5 Rovanpera 41; 6 Katsuta 36; 7 Sordo 29; 8 Breen 24; 9 Greensmith 22; 10 Fourmaux 20.

MANUFACTURERS’ CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT 183; 2 Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT 146; 3 M-Sport Ford WRT 64; 4 Hyundai 2C Competition 28.



NEXT EVENT

RALLY ITALY 10 JUNE ISSUE

Dani Sordo has won the previous two outings in Sardinia – can he make it three in a row? Will an on-form Evans be able to take the championship lead?

Pourchaire on a high, Lawson's dream crushed

FIA FORMULA 2
MONTE CARLO (MCO)
21-22 MAY
ROUND 2/8

Monaco is all about fine margins that define joy and heartbreak, and those two emotions were to the fore as the FIA Formula 2 Championship awoke from an eight-week slumber. Round two will be remembered for two moments now etched into the minds of F2 rookies Theo Pourchaire and Liam Lawson. The Frenchman became the youngest-ever series polesitter and race winner, aged just 17, while the Kiwi had a well-deserved victory taken away by the stewards for using an incorrect throttle map.

ART Grand Prix talent Pourchaire offered a glimpse into his star quality by lighting up the timing screens in qualifying to claim pole by an impressive 0.4 seconds from Prema's Robert Shwartzman. He would convert his Monaco-debut starting position into victory in Saturday's feature race.

It was a qualifying session of extremes, with Pourchaire's success contrasted by the fate of Alessio Deledda, who failed to set a time within 107% of pole, but the FIA stewards allowed him to race.

With the top 10 from qualifying reversed for race one, championship leader Guanyu Zhou found himself on pole for Friday's opening heat. It was an advantage he would ram home by winning the race, his second victory of 2021.

The UNI Virtuosi-run Alpine F1 protege had to hold his nerve as a late safety car, caused by Gianluca Petecof's crash at the Swimming Pool, wiped out his 8s lead. Team-mate Felipe Drugovich took second, capitalising on an engine failure for Christian Lundgaard, who had held the position for the majority of the race. Williams Formula 1 test driver Roy Nissany



also took advantage of Lundgaard's misfortune to claim his maiden F2 podium in third, which he reckoned was inspired by a lesson learned from watching a Novak Djokovic versus Rafael Nadal tennis match.

Overnight rain left drivers facing a damp track for Saturday's sprint race, and the action began even before it had started. A reversal of the top 10 from race one presented an all-New Zealand front row of Marcus Armstrong and Lawson, courtesy of the former's last-lap heroics to snatch 10th by muscling past Jehan Daruvala. But Armstrong suffered a problem on the way to the grid, leaving the pole slot empty. Oscar Piastri took advantage to jump and grab the lead from the Hitech GP car of Lawson,

although it soon became clear that Lawson was in a different league in the tricky conditions, and he demoted Prema man Piastri with a stunning pass at Rascasse.

Dan Ticktum, running in third, also passed Piastri at the Nouvelle Chicane as the track became drier. But there was no stopping Lawson, who survived a late safety car restart to take the win from Ticktum and Piastri, or so he thought.

After enjoying the debut Monaco victory celebrations, Lawson was excluded when stewards found that he had used an incorrect throttle map at the start, breaching the regulations. That handed the win to Ticktum, who revealed that a broken throttle motor almost prevented his



Consistent Zhou keeps place atop points table



Lawson found loss of win hard to swallow



Pourchaire
holds off
Shwartzman at the
start – next stop, the
top step of the
podium

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY
motorsport
IMAGES

Carlin machine from starting. Piastri took second, while Lawson's team-mate Juri Vips inherited third.

"I have no words right now," said Lawson. "We have been disqualified due to selecting the wrong throttle map off the start. Winning in Monaco is something I dreamed of so this is a tough one to swallow."

The feature race allowed Pourchaire to announce himself as an F1 star of the future by producing a faultless lights-to-flag drive to victory. In doing so, he inherits the record of youngest F2 race winner from Lando Norris. "I have become the youngest-ever pole winner and race winner – I can't believe it," said Pourchaire. "The race was so stressful. I was under pressure. Monaco is unique, you cannot make a mistake here, so I was so concentrated. We did the perfect race. It feels incredible."

Piastri bagged second again after taking advantage of a slow pitstop for luckless Prema team-mate Shwartzman, who salvaged fourth from a weekend to forget that was headlined by crashing out of race one on the opening lap. Drugovich took the final podium spot after making the alternate tyre strategy work, allowing him to climb from ninth.

Zhou's consistency, highlighted by a solid drive from 10th to fifth, ensures he holds a 16-point lead from Piastri ahead of round three in Baku next month.

TOM HOWARD

RESULTS ROUND 2/8, MONTE CARLO (MCO), 21-22 MAY FEAT RACE (42 LAPS – 87.088 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TIME
1	Theo Pourchaire (FRA)	ART Grand Prix	1h01m02.089s
2	Oscar Piastri (AUS)	Prema Racing	+2.894s
3	Felipe Drugovich (BRA)	UNI Virtuosi Racing	+14.261s
4	Robert Shwartzman (RUS)	Prema Racing	+17.910s
5	Guanyu Zhou (CHN)	UNI Virtuosi Racing	+24.130s
6	Ralph Boschung (CHE)	Campos Racing	+30.693s
7	Liam Lawson (NZL)	Hitech Grand Prix	+31.288s
8	Juri Vips (EST)	Hitech Grand Prix	+37.051s
9	Roy Nissany (ISR)	DAMS	+46.563s
10	Richard Verschoor (NLD)	MP Motorsport	+49.513s
11	Bent Viscaal (NLD)	Trident	+51.380s
12	Christian Lundgaard (DNK)	ART Grand Prix	+52.966s
13	David Beckmann (DEU)	Charouz Racing	+55.834s
14	Marino Sato (JPN)	Trident	+1m11.237s
15	Guilherme Samaia (BRA)	Charouz Racing	-1 lap
16	Gianluca Petecof (BRA)	Campos Racing	-1 lap
17	Alessio Deledda (ITA)	HWA Racelab	-1 lap
18	Jack Aitken (GBR)	HWA Racelab	-2 laps
R	Dan Ticktum (GBR)	Carlin	32 laps-accident
R	Lirim Zendeli (DEU)	MP Motorsport	30 laps-accident
R	Marcus Armstrong (NZL)	DAMS	29 laps-accident
R	Jehan Daruvala (IND)	Carlin	17 laps-accident

QUALIFYING – GROUP A

1 Pourchaire 1m20.985s;
3 Piastri 1m21.443s;
5 Vips 1m21.523s;
7 Nissany 1m22.102s;
9 Drugovich 1m22.131s;
11 Daruvala 1m22.244s;
13 Beckmann 1m22.585s;
15 Viscaal 1m22.827s;
17 Zendeli 1m22.933s;
19 Petecof 1m23.344s;
21 Aitken 1m23.353s.

QUALIFYING – GROUP B

2 Shwartzman 1m21.403s;
4 Ticktum 1m21.589s;
6 Boschung 1m21.854s;
8 Lundgaard 1m21.877s;
10 Zhou 1m21.912s;
12 Lawson 1m21.941s;
14 Armstrong 1m22.168s;
16 Verschoor 1m22.758s;
18 Sato 1m24.091s;
20 Samaia 1m24.302s;
22 Deledda 1m27.744s.

NEXT EVENT

BAKU
10 JUNE ISSUE

Winner's average speed 85.611mph. Fastest lap Zhou 1m21.912s, 91.130mph.

SPRINT RACE 1 (30 LAPS – 62.205 MILES)

GRID Decided by result of qualifying, with top 10 reversed.

1 Zhou 44m21.272s; 2 Drugovich +2.396s; 3 Nissany +5.909s; 4 Boschung +7.430s; 5 Vips +11.007s; 6 Ticktum +11.495s; 7 Pourchaire +13.247s; 8 Piastri +15.247s; 9 Lawson +17.514s; 10 Armstrong +18.947s; 11 Daruvala +19.290s; 12 Beckmann +19.546s; 13 Verschoor +19.915s; 14 Viscaal +20.234s; 15 Zendeli +20.755s; 16 Aitken +21.168s; 17 Samaia +21.873s; 18 Deledda -1 lap; 19 Sato 28 laps-accident; R Petecof 23 laps-accident; R Lundgaard 14 laps-engine; R Shwartzman 1 lap-accident.

Winner's average speed 84.147mph. Fastest lap Vips 1m22.125s, 90.893mph.

SPRINT RACE 2 (28 LAPS – 58.058 MILES)

GRID Decided by result of Sprint race 1, with top 10 finishers reversed.

1 Ticktum 47m53.826s; 2 Piastri +0.765s; 3 Vips +1.172s; 4 Pourchaire +2.101s; 5 Boschung +6.268s; 6 Verschoor +8.381s; 7 Zendeli +13.384s; 8 Daruvala +15.894s; 9 Aitken +16.310s; 10 Shwartzman +39.225s; 11 Viscaal +1m03.889s; 12 Deledda -1 lap; 13 Samaia -1 lap; 14 Drugovich -2 laps; 15 Zhou -2 laps; EX Lawson -throttle map; R Beckmann 23 laps-accident; R Nissany 22 laps-accident; R Lundgaard 16 laps-technical; R Sato 9 laps-accident; R Armstrong 2 laps-mechanical; R Petecof 0 laps-accident.

Winner's average speed 72.728mph. Fastest lap Shwartzman 1m30.728s, 82.275mph.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Zhou 68; 2 Piastri 52; 3 Pourchaire 47; 4 Ticktum 38; 5 Lawson 36; 6 Shwartzman 30; 7 Drugovich 29; 8 Daruvala 29; 9 Verschoor 23; 10 Vips 22.



Ticktum lucky to make
start of second sprint race
– then inherited victory

Maloney and Hadjar head R-ace GP rout

**FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN
MONTE CARLO (MCO)
22-23 MAY
ROUND 3/10**

The national anthem of Barbados rang out in Monaco last Sunday as 2019 British Formula 4 champion Zane Maloney headed an R-ace GP podium lockout in the second Formula Regional European by Alpine encounter.

Although the final classification was eventually wound back by some nine laps after an appeal from the teams over the race being extended due to a red flag on the opening tour, full points were still awarded as Maloney took charge from pole position.

That early crash on Sunday took out points leader Gregoire Saucy when the ART Grand Prix racer bashed into the rear of William Alatalo's Arden machine into Sainte Devote before they tangled again on the run up to Beau Rivage. This was swiftly followed by a chain reaction shunt that called the halo into action when Nicola Marinangeli came to rest upside down.

But it was of no moment to Maloney, who managed safety car restarts courtesy of crashes at Sainte Devote and in the tunnel



Maloney leads team-mate and race-one victor Hadjar

to bag the eventual spoils by 0.6s ahead of team-mates Isack Hadjar and Hadrien David.

The top two marked a reversal of the positions from the Saturday contest when young French racer Hadjar romped to a 7.4s triumph over Maloney and Prema Powerteam's Paul Aron. Impressively,

that commanding margin came despite a safety car – called when Marinangeli spun at the Nouvelle Chicane – forcing him to build up his advantage from scratch.

Despite the dramatic exit and a point-less 22nd in race one, Saucy remains atop the standings by 13 points.

Ten Voorde victorious aboard new Porsche

**PORSCHE SUPERCUP
MONTE CARLO (MCO)
23 MAY
ROUND 1/8**

With a new Porsche 911 GT3 road car sitting in the showrooms, the marque's flagship one-make series couldn't be seen lapping the Monaco streets in

obsolete machinery. And so, the new Supercup season brought the arrival of fresh 992 Cup kit for the drivers. But it was a familiar name doing the bidding at the top of the leaderboard as reigning champion Larry ten Voorde mastered the principality.

The Dutch racer landed his Team GP Elite-run car on pole by 0.175s over the Martinet by Almeras duo of Jaxon Evans

and ex-FIA F2 driver Dorian Bocolacci. And to underline the challenge of passing at Monaco, the top four – rounded out by Fach Auto Tech's Christopher Zochling – all finished where they started.

Ten Voorde led cleanly away as the midfield got it badly wrong on the run up Beau Rivage. Jean-Baptiste Simmenauer smeared his Lechner Racing car along the barrier, which kickstarted a pile-up that eliminated five other drivers and forced the red flags to be waved.

Former British Touring Car Championship fan-favourite Michael Crees then brought a safety car intervention one lap into the restarted contest when he whacked his Parker Revs Motorsport machine into the wall on the exit of Sainte Devote. Ten Voorde managed the pack during the green-flag periods to bag the spoils by 3.3s.

Harry King, who dominated the 2020 Porsche Carrera Cup GB campaign by winning all but four races, qualified 11th and finished ninth on his Supercup debut.



Reigning champ ten Voorde romped from pole to win

T2 Racing earns maiden 24H spoils in Germany

24H SERIES
HOCKENHEIM (DEU)
22-23 MAY
ROUND 4/8

A handily timed pitstop amid a caution period late in the race allowed the Porsche line-up of Pieder Decurtins, Manuel Lauck and Marc Basseng to bag the T2 Racing concern its first triumph in the 24H Series at Hockenheim last weekend.

Ferrari triple threat Josef Kral, Matus Vyboh and Dennis Waszek seized pole by the better part of fourth tenths and led for 159 of the eventual 384-lap contest. But as the race resumed on Sunday, they were leapfrogged by the 911 GT3-R at the off. The 488 GT3 machine put up a fight for position over the next few laps before conceding the place in the direct on-track scrap. However, as a variety of strategies played out, the lead continued to change hands throughout the day.

But a final Code 60 caution allowed events to fall in T2 Racing's favour when



a well-timed pitstop heading into the final hour put the Swiss squad on top, with Basseng leading Kral home to win by 53s.

Basseng said: "It's absolutely unbelievable. It's our second race with this team and the new car, and now we've won. It was really hard, a big challenge, but our strategy was absolutely perfect, and we made no mistakes. We had a little bit of luck as

well, but in the end that's what you need to win a race like this."

The Leipert Motorsport Lamborghini Huracan crew of Brendon Leitch/Tyler Cooke/Fidel Leib rounded out the podium and headed home the CP Racing Mercedes and Rutronik Racing by TECE squad's Audi as the top-five featured as many different marques.



Wet win matches Petty record

NASCAR CUP
AUSTIN (USA)
23 MAY
ROUND 14/36

Defending champion Chase Elliott opened his 2021 account after he emerged from a wet and wild inaugural NASCAR Cup race at the Circuit of The Americas with his first victory of the season.

The Chevrolet Camaro racer had not been in contention for much of the event but found himself out front after short-pitting early in the final stage of the Texas Grand Prix. Even so, he was told repeatedly by his Hendrick Motorsports crew that he would be a couple of laps short of fuel if green-flag conditions remained.

Elliott had built up a big lead on his HMS team-mate Kyle Larson when continued heavy rain and standing water forced the

race to be stopped for visibility issues for the second time. But it did not resume, with events called off after 54 of the scheduled 68 laps to hand Elliott the spoils.

"I've never won a rain race before, so it's kind of cool," he said. "I'm just super proud of our team for just continuing to fight. We started the day, and we weren't very good. We kept making good changes throughout the day. I'm really proud of that."

All four HMS drivers have now won at least one race this season, and Elliott's victory was the 268th by the Hendrick organisation, tying Petty Enterprises for the most in Cup history.

Team owner Rick Hendrick said: "When you win a race, you're excited no matter how you got there. For the fans, I wish it could have been dry because the guys put on a heck of a show in the rain and in the dry."

JIM UTTER

WEEKEND WINNERS

FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN MONACO (MCO)

Race 1 Isack Hadjar

R-ace GP

Race 2 Zane Maloney

R-ace GP

PORSCHE SUPERCUP

MONACO (MCO)

Larry ten Voorde

Team GP Elite

24H SERIES

HOCKENHEIM (DEU)

Pieder Decurtins/Manuel Lauck/Marc Basseng

T2 Racing (Porsche 911 GT3-R)

NASCAR CUP

AUSTIN (USA)

Chase Elliott

Hendrick Motorsports

(Chevrolet Camaro)

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES

AUSTIN (USA)

Kyle Busch

Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota Supra)

NASCAR TRUCK SERIES

AUSTIN (USA)

Todd Gilliland

Front Row Motorsports (Ford F-150)



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INDY 500
PREVIEW

A CLASSIC CONTEST OF EXPERIENCE VERSUS YOUTH

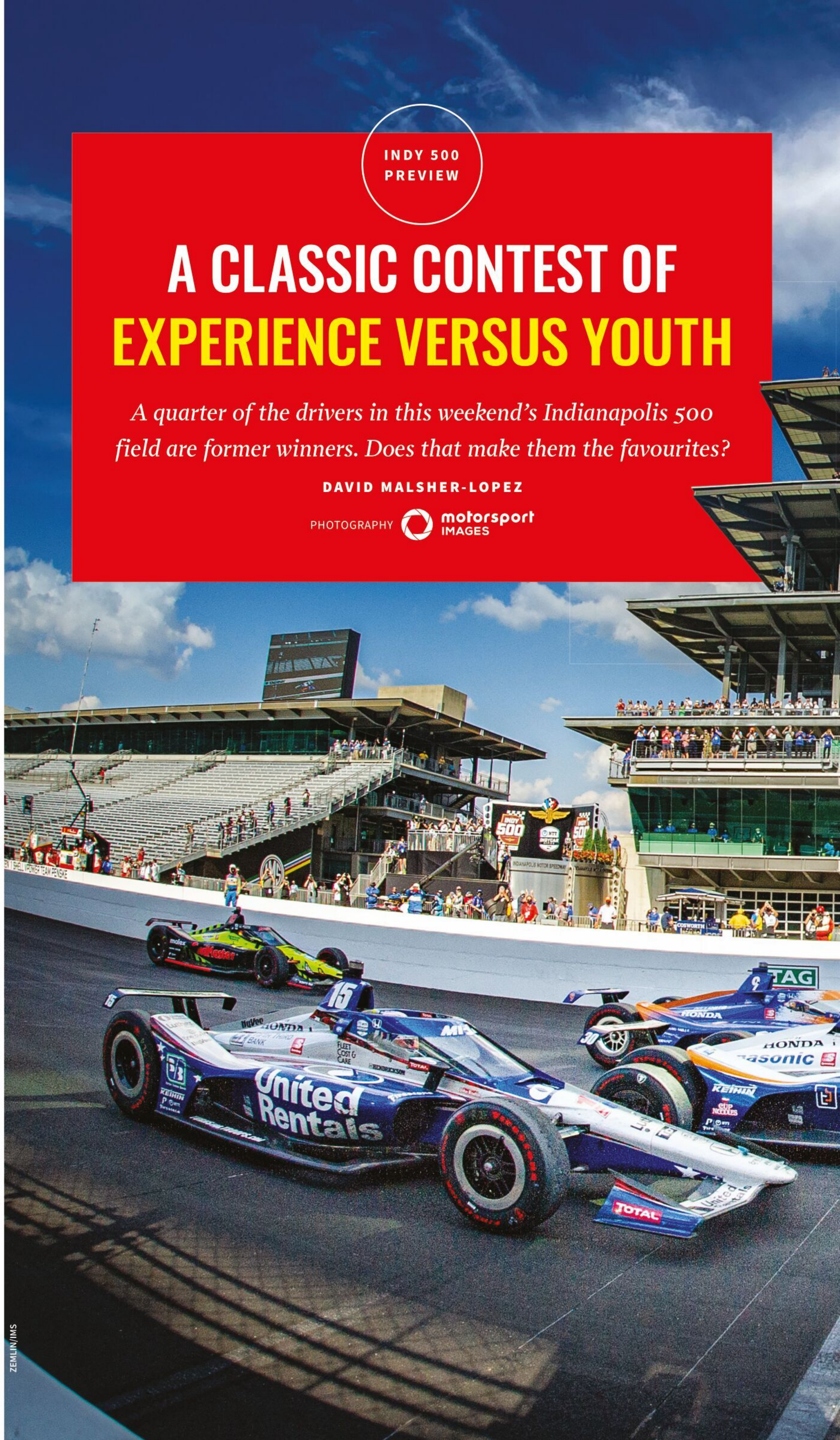
A quarter of the drivers in this weekend's Indianapolis 500 field are former winners. Does that make them the favourites?

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

PHOTOGRAPHY



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MILLER

Montoya, now 45, has a lot of work to do from row eight to win a third 500



Much has been made of the fact that there are nine former winners in the 33 cars qualified for this weekend's 105th running of the Indianapolis 500. They are Juan Pablo Montoya, Helio Castroneves, Scott Dixon, Tony Kanaan, Ryan Hunter-Reay, Alexander Rossi, Takuma Sato, Will Power and Simon Pagenaud, who between them have 13 victories at the iconic 2.5-mile superspeedway.

That's the most winners to start the race since 10 took the green in the 1992 edition, so yes, it's a big deal. And it looked like an even bigger deal after the first day of practice last week, when seven of those nine managed to occupy the top 11 slots. After the excitement of three new winners in the first five races of the 2021 IndyCar season, was the world's oldest venue now playing into the hands of the veterans?

"I've had so much time around here, I know the cars, and having worked with Juan and Helio before, these guys were very, very good because of experience," says Team Penske's 2018 winner Power. "They know how to get the car right and know where to put it and not get themselves in trouble. I feel like I'm at that stage now."

Montoya, the 2000 and 2015 winner who this year is the 'extra' in the Arrow McLaren SP team alongside Pato O'Ward and Felix Rosenqvist, concurs: "As you get more experience, you really know what you're looking at on the car, as Will said.

"But sometimes when you don't know enough, it's good as well, especially because of the way these cars drive at the moment. If you look at Pato, for example, he's comfortable with a car that is like really, really neutral. I mean, we can handle it, but for me is the question: can you do it for 200 laps?

"You look at how many young guys have won the 500 the last few years. I think that answers the question. I mean, do they have a shot? For sure, no question. I think Pato and [Colton] Herta and all those kids, they've got a lot of talent... Felix, as well. But at the end of the day you've got to run the 200 laps and see what happens at the end of it."

Hunter-Reay, the 2014 winner for Andretti Autosport, makes the point that veterans tend to deal with pressure and be more methodical in their build-up to the event. "Your head doesn't get spun out of control anymore, at least when you've won here and you've had experience going through the different steps of the week — the race running, the practice, the qualifying, the >>

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Hunter-Reay is part of experienced Andretti Autosport line-up



qualifying sims and things like that,” he says.

This year, practice comprised three days at race turbo boost (1.3 bar), Fast Friday at 1.4 bar, followed by two days of qualifying. Saturday set positions 10 to 30 on the grid, decided which cars would take part in the Fast Nine shootout on Sunday, and which five cars would take part in the nerve-wracking battle to land one of the last three places on the three-by-three grid.

Some teams began their qualifying simulations on Wednesday, just the second day of practice, because where you start has become so very important at the Speedway.

The days of Montoya or Dario Franchitti coming from last to first, as in 2015 and 2012 respectively, are gone for now, for it has become very difficult to pass from further back than fourth in a line of cars. This was particularly apparent in last year’s 500 and it’s something that IndyCar has tackled, after painstaking research along with Dallara, by partially filling in the holes in front of the sidepods that are there to prevent blowovers during accidents. This move forces the underwing to provide more front downforce.

“That’s crucial because when we went to the UAK18 [the universal aerokit introduced in 2018], the weight of the car moved forward a lot because of the side-impact structures and the removal of the wheelguards,” explains IndyCar head of aerodynamics Tino Belli. “That meant teams had to add downforce to the front of the car to make it turn, because the weight of the car was trying to make it understeer. Firestone helped with their more compliant right-front tyre, but there’s only so far they can go.

“Then, of course, we exacerbated the understeer problem in



“YOU’RE GOING TO HAVE ONE OF THOSE OLD-STYLE RACES WHERE THE FRONT THREE SWAP CONSTANTLY”

2020 with the additional weight of the aeroscreen – in this case, high up – and that put quite a lot more force on the right-front tyre once more. Therefore even more front wing angle was needed.

“So for this year on the superspeedways we filled in the front half of the hole, and this fill-in piece has a one-inch wicker [Gurney flap] on the trailing edge. That change is enough to allow teams to back off the front wing angle and make it less likely for the airflow to separate, and the cars can therefore run closer together.”

In addition, there is a turning vane/bargeboard, and underbody strakes, to give the teams options according to driver preference.

Have the changes worked? “Adding that downforce is certainly going to help the racing,” reckons Power, who will certainly hope they *have* worked, because he only just scraped onto the back row of the grid with his wall-brushing final run. “I think you’re going to have one of the old-style races where the front three are just swapping positions constantly because you can follow so close now.”

But Power also sounds a note of caution: “Once you get back in that train... it’s just so hard in all that dirty air. It’s hard in practice to understand, too, because you’ve got people checking up, you’ve got guys coming out on different fuel loads and new tyres and old tyres. You don’t know where people are set-up-wise or tyre-wise, so you don’t get a very good idea until race day how the cars will race.”

That being the case, again you’d imagine circumstances will put a premium on the kind of versatility that only a veteran will possess.

One exception seems to be O’Ward, whose composure and judgement have been two of his most impressive facets in the 27 IndyCar races in which he’s taken part so far. Of course, the then-21-year-old produced many eye-catching drives to podium finishes last year, and this year, at Texas Motor Speedway, he became an IndyCar winner. But his drive to sixth in last year’s 500 was no less impressive, overcoming Chevrolet’s slight but noticeable disadvantage to Honda and resisting the urge to try too hard to capture fifth place – the kind of effort that often results in a crash as track conditions change. >>

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DE SILVESTRO RETURNS WITH A NEW TEAM



ABBOTT

Six years ago, Beth Paretta tried to start Grace Autosport, a woman-dominated team, with the aim to enter the 2016 Indianapolis 500 with Katherine Legge as driver. The idea was stillborn but, when Penske Entertainment launched its Race for Equality and Change last summer, Paretta returned to her theme. Paretta Autosport is described as a “female forward” team – it includes 19 women among its 30 personnel – and she had no trouble convincing Roger Penske it would be an asset to the grid. And so Team Penske prepped the ex-Juncos chassis and Paretta did a deal with Chevrolet.

Those ingredients persuaded Simona de Silvestro, currently a works Porsche driver competing in the ADAC GT Masters championship, to revive her IndyCar career, which included 68 races between 2010 and 2015, with a best result of second at Houston in 2013.

“I think our association with Team Penske is incredible,” says de Silvestro, who didn’t put a wheel wrong in the April test at Indy, and looked similarly competent in official practice. “I’m just kind of getting confidence out there, and the car feels really good, so from that point of view I’m really excited to be here because I think we have the tools to do something great.”

“I haven’t been in an IndyCar for six years, so it’s great to have great team-mates around me and everyone from Team Penske really kind of helping us out on that side.”

Despite the 500’s appeal, there was a risk of disappointment for a start-up team in a year when 35 cars are competing for the 33 spots on the grid, and de Silvestro only just squeaked into the field at the last gasp.

“Absolutely, and we actually considered doing a bundle of races,” says Paretta when asked about the risk of failing to qualify. “Part of it has to do with Simona’s day job as a Porsche factory driver, so there were some conflicts with some of the dates... But we decided collectively with Roger and [Penske Entertainment] upper management that we would start here.”

Quizzed if this means there are more races coming up, Paretta nods, and de Silvestro suggests she is keen for more outings. Most likely would be the final two races of the season, at Laguna Seca and Long Beach.



OWENS/IMS

With that kind of maturity, Craig Hampson as team R&D engineer, Will Anderson as his race engineer, and McLaren’s aero input increasing for 2021, it would be foolish to doubt that O’Ward could pull off a magic performance. But still, if you’re looking for new faces destined to be cast in sterling silver and set on the Borg-Warner Trophy, you’d still be smart to focus on the veterans.

Three-time Indy polesitter and owner/driver Ed Carpenter has started the 500 17 times, the highlight being a runner-up finish in 2018, but he’s not the obvious candidate for victory that he once was. As the number of ovals on IndyCar’s schedule has dwindled, so there have been fewer chances for oval specialist Carpenter to get time in his car, and it sometimes shows, be it with mistakes, or difficulty in climbing out of a hole when his cars aren’t quick right off the truck. Fortunately, he lines up on the second row, with young team-mate VeeKay on the front rank.

Graham Rahal is another driver who is traditionally strong at the Brickyard, having far more impressive races than poor ones, but his speciality used to be climbing through the field – only three times in 13 years has he started the race from the first three rows, and only once in the previous 10. On the upside, that occasion was last year.

“JOSEF’S A PERFECTIONIST AND HE’S TRYING TO MAKE EVERYTHING BETTER – HE’S NEVER FULLY SATISFIED”

But Rahal’s team-mate, two-time and 2020 race winner Takuma Sato, started from the front row, and that’s what put him in the mix throughout the race, whereas Rahal had to fight through from eighth, and that’s tough enough to take several stints. This year it’s worse, with Sato starting 15th and Rahal 18th.

Looking at the grid, the most obvious candidates for becoming a first-time winner are Herta and VeeKay, who start on the front row alongside polesitting veteran Scott Dixon. But, allowing for the technical changes to make it easier to race, Penske’s two-time IndyCar Series champion Josef Newgarden can’t be ruled out from the seventh row. Last year was a poor one for Roger Penske’s famous squad at the Speedway where it has earned 18 wins since 1972, two of which were delivered by current drivers Power and Simon Pagenaud. Three of the Penske cars qualified outside the top 20, and that same trio finished the race outside the top 10. Newgarden, by contrast, started 13th and dug and hustled his way up to claim fifth at the chequered flag, and was the leading Chevrolet-powered driver.

Suitably chastened, throughout the off-season and into this

An Indy 500 victory is still missing from Newgarden’s CV. It’ll be tough to change that



LEVITT



campaign, Penske engineers doubled down on their efforts to regain The Captain's team its traditional position in the top echelon of victory contenders at IMS. "A lot's changed since Indy last year," says Newgarden's race engineer Gavin Ward. "In terms of the Speedway package, I'd say this is the biggest change since we switched to the UAK18 at the end of 2017. New underwing infill parts, the front of the floor, the addition of the bargeboard and strakes... that's definitely given us a lot to look at to try and optimise."

"We did all right as top Chevy car last year, but we certainly weren't satisfied with our competitiveness, so there's been a huge emphasis on improving ourselves. And we've seen that bear fruit a bit. And we've worked hard with Chevy to improve our collaboration there."

Chevy itself also appears to have stepped up its game, although it only got two cars – ECR pair VeeKay and Carpenter – into the nine-way pole shootout, while Penske's best qualifier is rookie Scott McLaughlin in 17th. Both Montoya and Power feel that Hondas are better on pick-up, for example, when a driver is forced to breathe the throttle because they've been slowed by a car ahead, and that could be helpful on race day if the track becomes truly slick and all drivers are forced to soft pedal through the turns. But Chevy seems to be very strong at the top end, its drivers dominating through the speed traps at Turns 1 and 3 on race day boost levels.

But in anything other than dense atmospheric conditions, handling can be every bit as important as outright horsepower, and

it's well known that changing track conditions at Indy can turn a good car to bad. So it remains a regular dilemma for race engineers as to whether they should assume the 500 is going to be hot and slick, and work hard to optimise the car for those conditions, or have a potentially slightly slower car but one that is more readily evolvable with in-cockpit tools and on-pitlane adjustments.

"You're always keeping an eye on the forecast," says Ward, "but you're also thinking, 'What are we going to need if the day's more difficult than the day we're running on?' You don't want to kid yourself and go down a path with a configuration that you can't balance if you suddenly need to run more downforce, for example."

"Ideally, you're running the car in a window where it's benign regardless of conditions and you can go either way."

This will be Newgarden's 10th Indy 500, and his fifth with Penske, yet his best year at the Brickyard came when he raced for Ed Carpenter – qualified second, finished third in 2016.

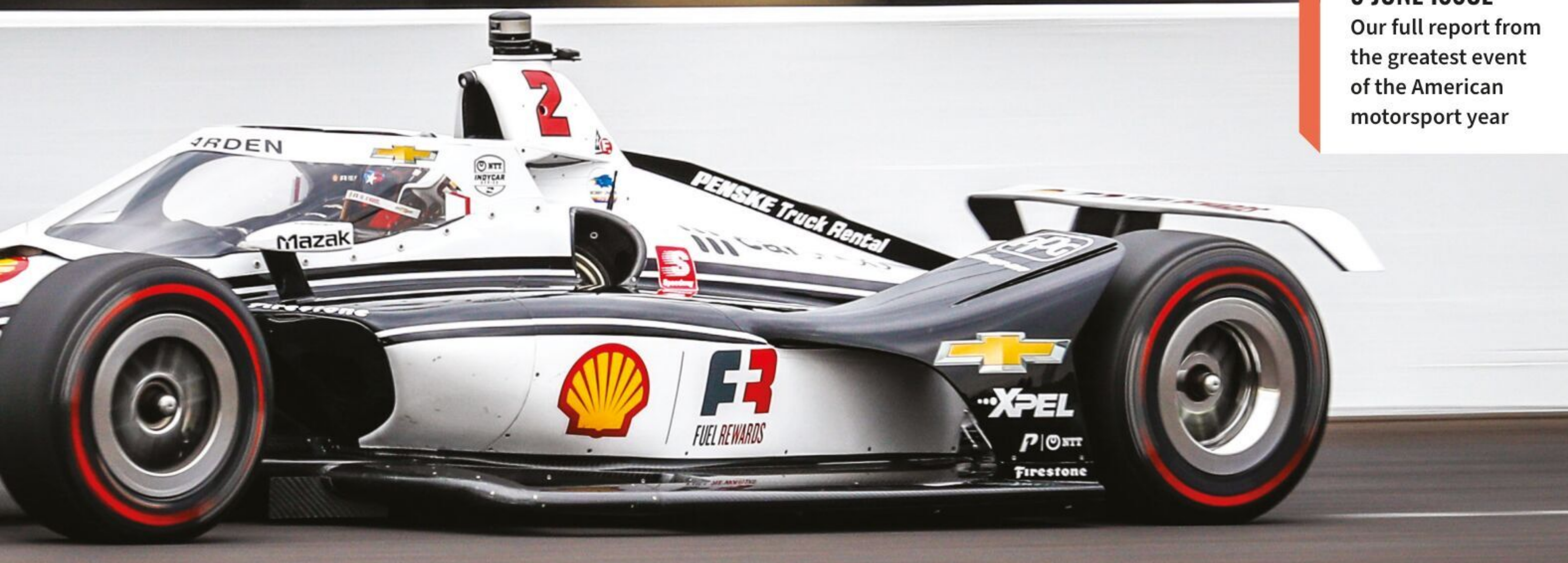
"Josef's a perfectionist and he's trying to make everything better – he's never fully satisfied, but he's in a pretty good place," replies Ward. "I do feel he gets stronger every year, and last year Josef's contribution relative to our team was very competitive. It was just a case of us collectively not really being in the mix for a win."

Newgarden himself says "I feel really good about us still" and "I'll be happier next weekend in race trim". Can this be his time? 🏆

NEXT WEEK

INDY 500 REPORT 3 JUNE ISSUE

Our full report from the greatest event of the American motorsport year







PLAYING THE WAITING GAME

Ferrari protege Callum Iloft is racing a Maranello product and driving F1 cars. But that's a 488 GT3 and an Alfa in FP1 respectively... Even so, he reckons his time could come to wear the Prancing Horse logo as a grand prix driver

ADAM COOPER

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**
IMAGES

Good things come to those who wait? Callum Iloft is certainly hoping that proves to be the case after his step back from front-line single-seater racing in 2021. Last year, the Ferrari Driver Academy protege was one of the stars of the FIA Formula 2 series, and eventually finished runner-up to Maranello stablemate Mick Schumacher. He had harboured serious hopes of being promoted to a slot at Haas or Alfa Romeo, Ferrari's partner teams. But even as the end of F2 campaign drew to a close, he knew he would be standing by as Schumacher's graduation to F1 was confirmed, along with those of third-placed Yuki Tsunoda and fifth-placed Nikita Mazepin.

With no slot available, and after opting not to have a third crack at F2, Iloft has moved into the role as second reserve at Alfa. He also has a programme in the GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup with the Iron Lynx Ferrari squad to help keep him race fit. The Alfa deal at least puts him a step closer to a race seat. He's already enjoyed one FP1 outing, in Portugal, and there are four or five more to come as the year progresses. At some races where Robert Kubica isn't available he will be the primary reserve, and he could be needed if Ferrari has a problem and Antonio Giovinazzi is called upon to switch to the works team, leaving an Alfa seat vacant.

So the 22-year-old is keeping himself busy, and getting over the disappointment of not going straight into a race seat in 2021. "Obviously, I wasn't best pleased when I first got the news, because it is quite hard to see your competitors make the step up," he admits. "But I'm one of these people that once you're in a situation that you can't necessarily change, and once you're put in a position where you have to deal with it, you've got to make the most of it. Which is what I'm trying to do. And to be honest, if anything it's probably a good thing in the sense that I'll just work harder to make it happen. So for me, it's not an option to have if, butts or maybes. It's like we'll make it happen or no, basically!"

Iloft insists that until the Haas and Alfa seats were officially filled, he still believed he had a chance of finding a berth, despite the obvious momentum behind Schumacher and indications that there would be no change at Alfa. "Of course I was trying to always look for positives," he reflects. "But it's not up to me. I've got to work for

"FOR ME, IT'S NOT AN OPTION TO HAVE IF, BUTS OR MAYBES. IT'S LIKE WE'LL MAKE IT HAPPEN OR NO, BASICALLY!"



it; I've got to make sure that someone is completely happy in taking me; I've got to make sure I'm the full package. Because once you're here, you've got to be at the top of your game all the time. I've got to be confident in that process, because that's all I can be. But I like to make things happen to myself – I'm a very stubborn kid if someone says no! I'll push as much as possible."

He is now totally immersed in the Hinwil camp, soaking up what information he can, while also staying close to Ferrari. "I'm additional reserve driver for Alfa Romeo, and test driver for Ferrari," Iloft explains. "So simply explained, it's split between me and Robert [Kubica] for the season. Obviously, he has a few >>

more LMP commitments than I have in GT, because I've only got five race weekends. So when he's not around and he's got commitments on that side, I'll be here. The next one for me is Baku [next month]. In between races I'll be in Maranello, and head over to Hinwil sometimes for some sim and preparation.

"It's very variable, because some race weekends I'll be at the track, some race weekends in Maranello. I'm there if someone needs me, depending on whatever the conditions are. Obviously I'm part of FDA, so we've got our weekly schedules on that side. I help Ferrari on the test side, if there's anything that needs to be done there. So I'm there for whoever needs me, and trying to get as much experience and learning as possible. If I'm not on the tracks, I'll be watching as closely as possible back in the factory."

A third driver role is not always easy – all that hanging around at tracks when you're not racing – but Iloft is making the most of the Alfa opportunity. "I end up with probably too many questions for everyone to be able to answer, because they're all busy!" he laughs. "I'm in a year where I'm in this position, so I've got to make the most of it. OK, it's not personal experience, but you can watch and learn from others. I speak to Mick, I've spoken to Charles [Leclerc]. I do get an understanding from them what the limitations might be in a rookie season, that kind of thing. So it's more about being as ready as possible for when an opportunity arises.

"A Friday [FP1] is a good way to hopefully have a regular

"I'VE GOT TO SHOW I'M SOMEONE YOU'D TRUST AND PUT IN THE CAR AND KNOW THEY'D DO A GOOD JOB"

experience and learn as much as possible in a short amount of time. I've got to show that I'm someone that you'd be happy to trust and put in the car and know that they would do a good job."

The first FP1 outing in Portugal was a big moment for Iloft, especially after the disappointment of bad weather washing out his planned outing with Haas at the Nurburgring last year. "It's not just turning up on the weekend – you've got to do the pre-preparation, seat fit, all the data and everything like that, it was like a solid couple of weeks of prep," he says. "To not then drive was a bit of a disappointment!"

"So to finally get out in Portugal was a good experience. It's different compared to a free practice day, or the Abu Dhabi rookie test. It's limited running, you've got an hour, and all the cars are on track at the same time. It's just a bit more compact, and you've got to make sure everything's perfect and get up to speed as quick

as possible. It was definitely a very positive session, things I needed to improve and learn on, and there was progress throughout. And hopefully for the next one, there should be a bit more of a step."

Crucially, he impressed his team boss. "You have to show the pace, but most important, you don't have to crash," says Alfa's Fred Vasseur. "You have to show that you are the best one, but please don't put the wheel on the kerb!"

"And this exercise is very difficult. Portimao is probably the most tricky track, but I think he did a very, very strong performance. The most important thing for us also is to keep him in the car on a monthly basis, let's say, because part of his job is the simulator, and he needs to get connected to the car. He's very well integrated into the team, and is doing a good job. And I'm pleased to have him on board."

Iloft has no regrets about not continuing in F2 for a third season,



Iloft gets ready for a Ferrari test run



Iloft gave a good account of himself on GTWCE debut in Ferrari 488 GT3

Back in 2017, he fought Lando Norris in European F3



Runner-up position came in F2 last year



Taking part for Alfa in post-season Abu Dhabi test

as tempting as it was to be out there racing. In effect he had more to lose than to gain. "I had discussions, within Ferrari, within the F2 teams," he confirms.

"But the call was on the late side of what the situation was for F1. And so by that time, you had a lot of the F2 teams already decided, and it's not so easy to then change teams again and be in another unfamiliar environment.

"I finished second in the championship, five poles, three wins. I was as close as you were going to get to winning it. Not that you don't want to take that risk: I love to race F2, it was a great format, it's just there was only one place better I could go. And I think, with the three races [the new F2 weekend format], a lot has changed. Also, as much as regular driving is important, which it is, if you need to need jump in I think there's another level of information that you need to learn from F1 which I wasn't going to maximise if I was doing a full race season in F2."

Iloft admits that he was a bit wary about committing to a race programme in GTs, but he enjoyed his first outing at Monza, which ended with him taking fourth place. "To be honest, I was a little bit hesitant at first, because it's not what I'm used to, it's not what I'm comfortable with," he says. "But now that I've done one race weekend, and quite a few tests, I really enjoy it. It's a good immersive series, first of all, very competitive, and it's another element of driving that I haven't really experienced. The endurance side, longer stints. There's always something to learn and always something to transfer.

"It's not the same car, it's not anywhere near to a single-seater in corner speeds, but the focus of driving, the repetition on that side, feedback, all of that, there's another thing that you have to adapt to. I'm just doing the endurance races – Monza, Paul Ricard, Spa, Barcelona, all proper tracks. The Spa 24 Hours will be an experience, for sure."

The GT programme is not going to help Iloft into an F1 seat, but what might assist him as the year progresses is strong form from his former rivals, Tsunoda and Schumacher. "Yuki made a great impression in Bahrain, it was really good to watch, actually," enthuses Iloft. "So from that side, it was a good benchmark to say, 'Look, here's what one guy can do.' With Mick, we all know that he takes a bit of time to get there. But once he's there, he will be good. And you can already see the pace is getting better. I think they're doing a good job, and I think it's only a matter of time before the reference is even closer. And it's easier for me to say, 'Well, I was in the middle of these two guys!'"

"I still think I'm in a very, very good position. Yes, I have to wait a year. I've seen people wait two. I think the focus is still on doing the best job as possible on the GT side, and the FP1 side, and then hopefully an opportunity may present itself." ❧

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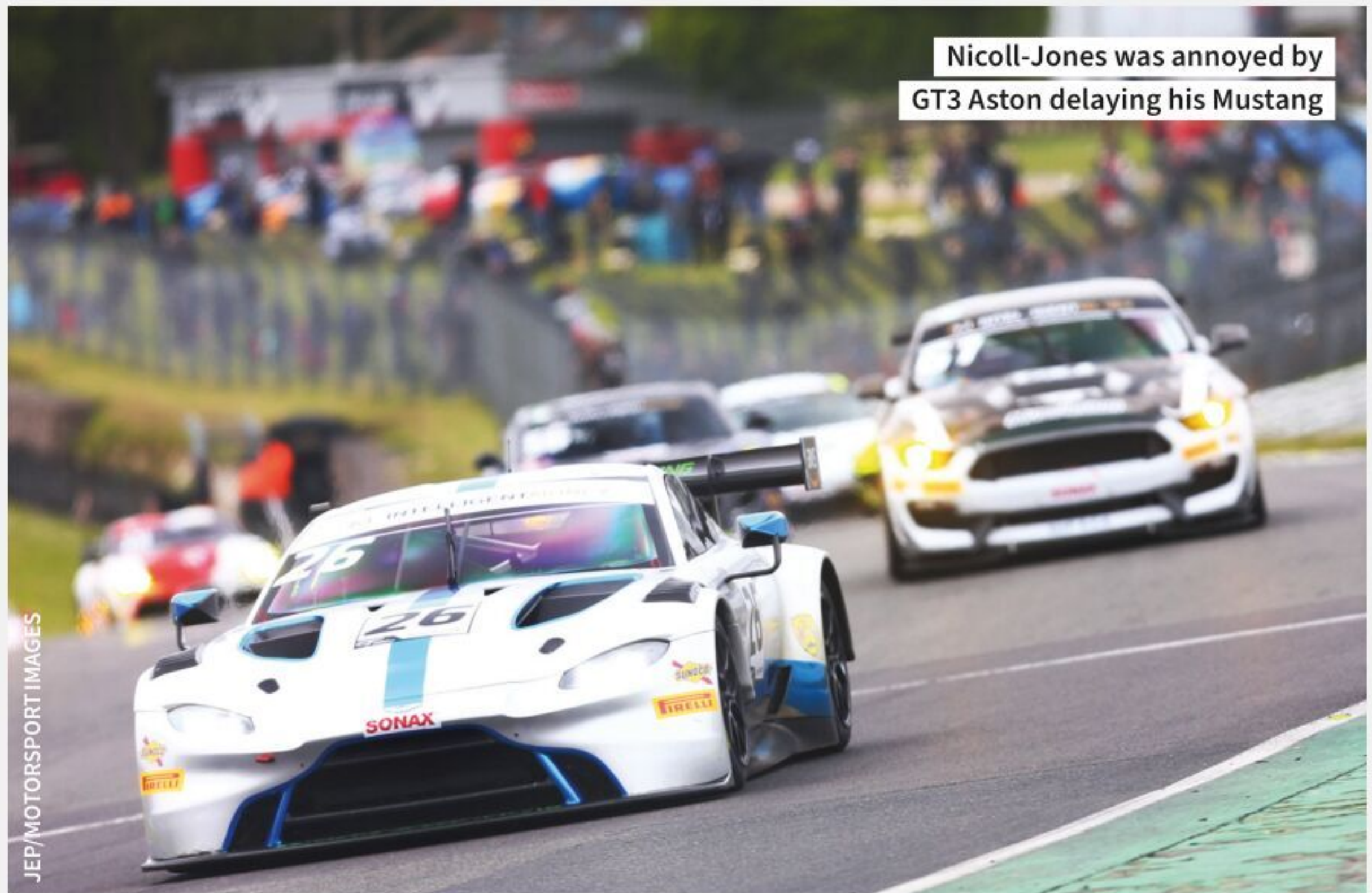
BRITISH GT

Academy Motorsport boss Matt Nicoll-Jones has called upon British GT organiser SRO to introduce new rules to maintain standards in the GT3 class after the GT4 lead battle in last weekend's Brands Hatch season opener was held up in the early stages.

Ultimate Speed Aston Martin crew Mike Brown and Matt Manderson set an aggregate qualifying time 7.879 seconds slower than the identical polesitting Beechdean AMR Vantage GT3 of Andrew Howard and Jonny Adam, and dropped behind GT4 class leader Will Burns's Century Motorsport BMW M4.

Brown then came under pressure from Academy Mustang driver Will Moore, who was eager not to lose sight of Burns. This prompted Brown to defend and cost both drivers time. Following a safety car reprieve, Brown then overtook Burns on lap 16, but Academy's hopes of fighting for victory were curtailed when Moore was hit by Stewart Proctor's McLaren 720S GT3 at Druids and broke his left-front suspension.

Nicoll-Jones said that Proctor's race-ending move was "completely unnecessary", but reserved most criticism for the Ultimate Speed car disrupting the GT4 lead fight. "That car should be significantly quicker," he said. "If he can't keep with his own pack and he's having a fight with a different class, then maybe he wants to have a look at why he's here.



"Maybe [SRO] need to consider whether they look at people's times and consider whether they're within a certain percentage of the pack. Having to radio my driver to say, 'Don't try and overtake him', despite holding us up, because we've got to allow him to try and get away, is just not something you should ever have to deal with."

Many racing categories use a 107% rule to weed out slower entries, but Ultimate Speed would have been within this bracket by just under 4s.

Century boss Nathan Freke, whose cars finished 1-2, added that Burns was "irate" during his stint, but suggested pre-race rain had been a

factor. "We're in a world where everyone is paying to be on track, so who are we to dictate who can and can't race?" he said. "It caused us a headache for maybe five laps. In reality you've got to deal with it."

British GT championship manager Lauren Granville said: "British GT has always catered for drivers with varying degrees of ability, and any decision based on speed alone is subjective unless specific performance rules are applied. As per our regulations, drivers must qualify within 115% of their class pole time, which all competitors comfortably achieved."

JAMES NEWBOLD



TF Astons back for Silverstone

BRITISH GT

British GT title-winning team TF Sport will return to the series with two Aston Martin Vantage GT3s at next month's three-hour Silverstone 500.

The Tom Ferrier-run squad has twice won GT3 and GT4 drivers' titles, but has now elected to focus on its campaigns in the World

Endurance Championship GTE Am division and European Le Mans Series LMP2 class, putting both its GT4 Astons up for sale.

After skipping last weekend's Brands Hatch curtain-raiser, the team will return to the GT3 division with two Pro-Am cars. Aston factory drivers Marco Sorensen and Charlie Eastwood will

share with Bonamy Grimes and Giacomo Petrobelli respectively on what is expected to be a one-off outing.

Elsewhere, 2019 British GT4 champion Tom Canning will deputise for Darren Turner in the Feathers Motorsport Aston Martin Vantage GT4 in two GT Cup meetings this year.

JAMES NEWBOLD

No Welsh race events until July at earliest

CORONAVIRUS

There will be no circuit racing in Wales until July at the earliest, with continued uncertainty surrounding when the devolved government will lift the ban on outdoor events leading to June meetings at Pembrey and Anglesey being cancelled or postponed.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Welsh government has adopted a more cautious approach than its counterpart in London, and this has had a significant impact upon motorsport. While the sport resumed in England in July last year, just one small trial event was held in the whole of 2020 in Wales. Motorsport is also yet to be given the green light in the country this year, despite it successfully beginning in England at the start of last month.

The British Automobile Racing Club's Truck event – scheduled for 19-20 June at Pembrey – has now been cancelled as the next Welsh government review is not due until the start of next month, making it too short notice to axe the meeting after hearing the outcome of that.

"It's really frustrating and nobody is able to give you a straight answer," said



Ben Taylor, group CEO of the BARC, which operates Pembrey. "If you're not organised under a governing body, you can do what you want. A car boot sale can take place. Five miles away, you've got Ffos Las race course, which is running every week behind closed doors."

Taylor is concerned by the long-term impact that the lack of activity is having on Welsh motorsport, saying he has "no idea" when a restart is possible.

"If we get nothing this year, who in their right mind is going to want to come to Wales to do their motorsport?" he said. "We built new garages at Pembrey 15 months ago and they've still not been used for an event."

The 750 Motor Club's event at Anglesey,

also planned for 19-20 June, has now been shuffled back to 21-22 August.

Club competitions manager Giles Groombridge said "we felt it was too late to leave people hanging on" to wait for the next government announcement.

"It does feel like the Welsh government is looking at sport as a whole, and motorsport is being treated like conventional team sports rather than looking at what we do," he added. "It's more akin to people going to a park with the space available – they're outdoors and contact is limited. I really feel for Pembrey and Anglesey – they're desperately trying to make things happen but are coming across barriers all the time."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Surer F2 March returns to action at Silverstone

HISTORIC F2

The March 782 raced by Marc Surer in European Formula 2 returned to action at Silverstone last weekend in the hands of owner Matthew Watts.

Chassis number 8 was raced by the Swiss in 1978, when he finished second in the points to works March team-mate Bruno Giacomelli. Surer went on to win the 1979 title, and then

graduated to F1.

At the end of the 1978 season, the 782 was sold and used as a Formula Atlantic car in the early 1980s, before later heading to France, where it was used in hillclimbs.

Watts bought it about three years ago and has carefully rebuilt it at his Retro Track and Air business in Gloucestershire.

"It is very original and we've even got the original bodywork,"



said Watts, who finished as runner-up in the second race at Silverstone. "The monocoque is original with some reskinning. All the suspension and even the

gearbox is original.

"It's a real piece of history and we don't think it had run for 25 or 30 years. I will use it as much as I can this year."

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Ex-F1 team manager Manwaring gets new Classic Team Lotus job

HISTORICS

Ex-Lotus Formula 1 team manager Rupert Manwaring is returning to the marque to take up a new role at Classic Team Lotus.

The 65-year-old Briton was team manager in 1989 and 1990 during his first four-year stint and then went back to work for Lotus Cars in 2011-18, eventually becoming head of motorsport. Now, he has joined CTL as business manager.

Manwaring will be working alongside managing director Clive Chapman, son of Lotus founder Colin, and team manager Chris Dinnage to help grow a business founded in 1994 to preserve the history of the F1 team and work with the owners of the cars it built.

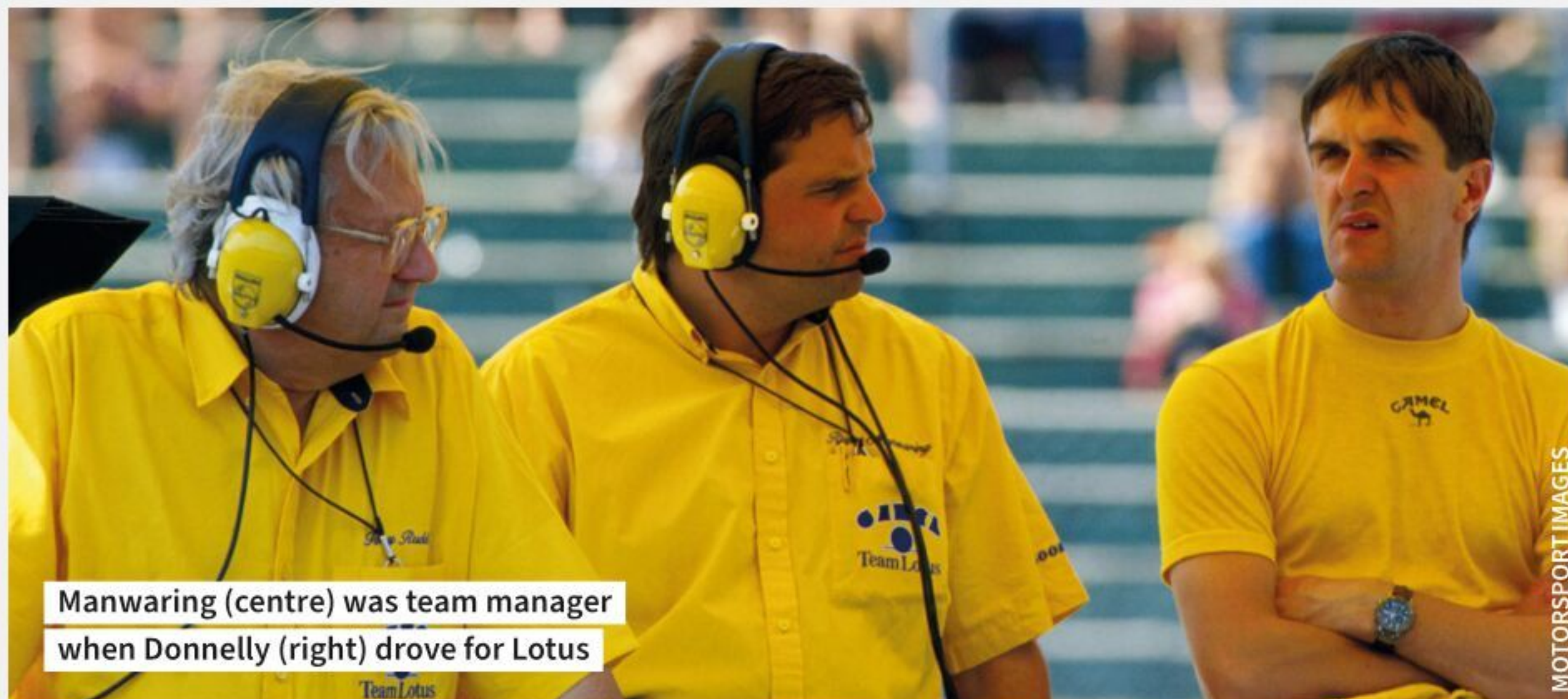
"We've become bigger and bigger over

the past 27 years, and Chris and I got to the point where we needed some help," said Chapman. "We feel there are a lot of opportunities out there we aren't taking advantage of."

Manwaring also worked for Surtees, Brabham, FORCE, Tyrrell and Minardi in F1, and said that he was looking forward to using all his experience to help CTL. "I've done lots of things in motorsport, so it's great to find something at this stage of my career where I can use all my knowledge and contacts," he said.

Manwaring joined Team Lotus in 1987 as assistant team manager to Peter Warr. "Peter could be hard, but he was fantastic to work for and I learned from him how to be a team manager," he said.

GARY WATKINS



Manwaring (centre) was team manager when Donnelly (right) drove for Lotus

Jacksons and Tustings in Lenhams

GUARDS TROPHY

Historic Formula Ford ace Cameron Jackson was unable to make his Lenham debut in the Guards Trophy at Silverstone last weekend after the car failed early on when in the hands of his father.

Jackson Jr grabbed pole among a stunning



Jackson (right) ran at the front before mechanical woe struck

Guards Trophy field, having only recently acquired the 1600cc Lotus Ford twin-cam engined Lenham P70 spider from Stuart Tizzard, part-exchanging his Classic FF1600 title-winning Van Diemen RF80 in the deal. A fuel line fire restricted testing, but the combo will take the fight to the quickest Chevron B8s.

The Jacksons and Robert and Ben Tusting – another father-and-son combo with extensive FFord experience, who have bought the ex-Brian Casey P69 spider – have again partnered with Neil Fowler Motorsport in Bourne. The pale blue cars will reshape the sharp end of Guards races once sorted.

Both showed their cards to the two-litre BMW-powered Chevron brigade, then broke. Overheating forced Simon Jackson to retire after six laps, while Ben Tusting climbed to second behind eventual winner Andy Newall (B8) before his electrics failed.

MARCUS PYE

IN THE HEADLINES

COMBE MSVR NOW ONE DAY

The June MotorSport Vision Racing meeting at Castle Combe has been reduced to a single-day event to prevent the Wiltshire circuit from exceeding its number of permitted race dates this year. The circuit's local categories were due to be in attendance, but these races – except for the Formula Ford contest – have been rescheduled to other events.

CLARK THWARTED AGAIN

Jeremy Clark's bid for a fourth straight 70s Road Sports title has now suffered two major blows. Clark's own Lotus Elan's engine failed in the season opener at Snetterton, but fellow racer Brian Mitcham offered his Elan for the next four races. Unfortunately, Mitcham's car then had a fire on a rolling road session last Friday and could not be repaired in time for the second round at Silverstone last Sunday.

ROYALE RESTORATION JOB

Will Schryver debuted father Michael's ex-Ray Stover Anglo-American Racing Royale RP37 in the Thundersports races at Silverstone. Royale boss Alan Cornock described Simon Hadfield's team restoration as "better than new". Hadfield, who shared Schryver Sr's Lola T492 in the 1980s, rebuilt it in tandem with the ex-Sean Walker RP37 he plans to race with son James.

NO BARK FOR EX-WOLF MARCH

Engine problems thwarted Paul Cope's two-litre Group 6 debut in Saturday's Thundersports opener at Silverstone. His ex-Walter Wolf March 75S-1 (below), originally raced by Stanislav Sterzel with BMW power, was reimported from Italy by Alan Hudd, from whom 1980s Sports 2000 and Thundersports racer Cope acquired it. Also competing were father and son Lawrence and Tim Jacobsen, giving their 1990 Sports 2000 title-winning Shrike P16 its first race in Thundersports. The Shrike's designer Richard Owen joined them on two test days recently to help.



Strong entry for delayed BRC opener

BRITISH RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

The level of interest shown by teams and fans on the eve of the new British Rally Championship season proves its reputation is now “back to where it really should be”, according to manager Iain Campbell.

After a delayed start of eight weeks, the seven-round calendar begins on Monday with the Neil Howard Stages at Oulton Park – itself a first for the series – alongside the Circuit Rally championship.

With no BRC action since last February’s Cambrian Rally as a result of the pandemic, the response from crews has been strong. Of the 45 to register, almost half are made up of four-wheel-drive R5 and newer Rally2 cars.

The excitement is justified, says Campbell, given that the entry for the opening round brings together many of the biggest names in UK rallying. This includes double champion Matt Edwards who, after three campaigns in a Ford Fiesta, makes the switch to a Volkswagen Polo GTI R5. He will be joined by returning WRC2 driver Rhys Yates (Fiesta), two-time BRC runner-up



Osian Pryce (Polo) and Ollie Mellors in his Proton, with former Porsche Carrera Cup GB racer Seb Perez and 2017 Irish Tarmac winner Sam Moffett also in the fray in Fiestas.

“We have former champions making a return, crews returning from the World Rally Championship, and a large number of first-time British Rally Championship contenders,” said Campbell. “It’s a massive deal, and it really feels like this is a return to where the BRC really should be.

“I’m truly delighted and excited to see these guys come back to the BRC this year and give our regulars a run for their money.”

There had been genuine fears that the BRC might suffer the same fate as last season when the emergence of COVID-19, and the subsequent lockdown restrictions, led to its cancellation after one round.

The picture for this year was initially bleak as the rate of infection remained stubbornly high and the original three rounds were cancelled. But the success of the vaccine rollout since then has given real hope to many, and provided the clarity that Campbell, his team, and competitors have been desperately searching for.

JASON CRAIG

Rookie champion Donnelly to defend BRX crown



BRITISH RALLYCROSS

Reigning British Rallycross 5 Nations Trophy champion Mark Donnelly has confirmed that he will defend his crown this year.

Donnelly claimed the spoils in his maiden British RX campaign last year driving an LD Motorsports Citroen DS 3 Supercar in the shortened season.

The series is set to be contested over seven rounds this year, beginning with a double-header at Lydden Hill this weekend.

Donnelly’s fellow former champions Julian Godfrey and Ollie O’Donovan will also take part, while O’Donovan’s Team RX Racing squad will give a rallycross Supercar debut to multiple national rally

event winner Connor McCloskey in a Ford Focus.

O’Donovan will campaign a brand-new Proton Iriz RX later in the season, but will begin in the Fiesta he drove to second in last year’s standings. Double European champion Derek Tohill is set to return with his Fiesta Supercar, having just missed out on the 2019 title.

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F3 frontrunner Simmons handed grid penalty

BRDC BRITISH F3

BRDC British Formula 3 title challenger Ayrton Simmons has been handed a five-place grid penalty for the next round following a collision at last weekend's Brands Hatch season opener.

Simmons, who finished third in the British F3 standings in 2019, has returned to the category this year with Chris Dittmann Racing, and took a dominant win in the opening race.

He also had pole for race two, but Bart Horsten attempted a move around the outside into Druids, with the pair making contact and Simmons landing on top of the Hitech-run car.

Both drivers retired, and Simmons was handed a five-place grid drop for the opening race at Silverstone next month. He said it was "100%" a racing incident, but "the stewards decided differently, unfortunately".

"I feel they feel there always needs to be



a right or wrong, but it's just two drivers fighting for the lead in a competitive championship and sometimes incidents are going to happen," said Simmons, who already trails championship leader Zak O'Sullivan by 32 points.

Horsten agreed that it was "one of those things". "It's one of those corners where there's not much room," he said. "Ayrton braked early and I braked pretty late, I left him quite a bit of room but he got out of shape mid-corner and, just because of the way he hit my wheels, they locked."

STEFAN MACKLEY

Influx of MGFs helps to boost Cockshoot Cup grid numbers

MG CAR CLUB

Nine MGFs helped boost the Cockshoot Cup to a 25-car grid at Oulton Park last weekend, its largest entry for several years, with more expected at the next round.

Mark Wright debuted his ex-Ian Gibbons MGF Cup car, and ran production-spec machinery in Class F for novices Max Pittock-Holdsworth and ex-motocrosser Tom Church, while debutant Gareth Jones fielded a TF LE500.

Newcomer Joe McClure is earmarked for the Gibbons car's next outing, when it will be refitted with a VHPD powerplant after running a standard engine last weekend. Wright will return in the ex-Vince Martin

Diamond Morris machine he used last year, now also restored to VHPD power, with Dave Coyne set to pedal Wright's ex-Mark Ticehurst JHR example.

They will join David Coulthard's former Nigel Reuben car as a quartet of machines from the manufacturer-backed MGF Cup, which supported British GT and British Formula 3 in 1998-2000.

"Their handling's lovely," said Wright, who also raced his Ford Sierra RS500 at Silverstone last Sunday. "You can get them crossed up and they will come back. They're great little cars to race, and I just want to bring the lads on so they can have some fun in this cheaper motor racing."

MARK PAULSON



SPECIAL PARADE FOR MUCH- MISSED RACER

LEGENDS

A poignant tribute will take place for Legends racer Gerard McCosh at the category's event at Brands Hatch next week.

McCosh, who died earlier this year, was a popular figure in the Legends paddock and was known for his car carrying a pink pig cuddly toy mascot called Napoleon (below).

To celebrate McCosh's life, a two-lap parade will take place before the end of the lunchbreak on the Sunday of the 5-6 June meeting. It will be led by McCosh's car – with Napoleon on board and being driven by Andrew Donald, who looked after the machine – and will feature the entire Legends grid. McCosh's partner and two daughters will also attend.

"We wanted to be able to do something special to mark Gerard's passing, to pay our respects to him and to honour and celebrate a wonderful life very well lived," said championship owner Phil Cooper. "It's going to be unbelievably emotional, and I doubt there will be a dry eye in the house when everyone sees Gerard's car lead the parade – with Napoleon onboard as he always was."

"It will be an incredible sight and I'm so, so pleased Gerard's partner Jane and [children] Millie and Claudia will be with us as we give Gerard the send-off he deserves. He was a wonderful competitor, a fantastic friend and an absolute gentleman. They broke the mould when they made Gerard McCosh. We're all devastated he's no longer with us, but I know he'll be there with us in spirit at Brands Hatch."



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Allcomers not all-encompassing

The concept of an Allcomers race is a charming one, but the harsh reality is that they rarely provide much of a spectacle

STEPHEN LICKORISH

There's an undeniable charm surrounding the concept of an Allcomers race. The idea of an eclectic array of machinery joining together on the grid for a non-championship, open-regulations contest with some David-versus-Goliath battles taking place certainly sounds appealing. A Ferrari 488 can share the track with a Mini Cooper, and a Ford Fiesta can pit its wits against a Jaguar E-type. But, sadly, often that proves to be an overly idealistic view, and they can be desperately dull, poorly supported affairs.

In decades gone by, the Allcomers race had a justifiable place among the club meeting schedules. There were fewer events back then, and therefore fewer opportunities for people to race their pride and joy. Many categories had only one race per meeting, unlike the double or triple-headers that are becoming ever more prevalent, and drivers were therefore keen to take part in an extra 'open' race. Nowadays, this only seems to be the case for longer enduros, where the driving – and the costs – can be shared.

Allcomers races also used to be a chance for unusual cars and specials to race, but the proliferation of (one-make and off-the-shelf) series in the modern era and decline of delightful self-built oddities means the vast majority of machines do have a place to race in a recognised series or championship.

In essence, it can be argued that the Allcomers sprint race –

“Witnessing such limp affairs puts people off entering and the downward spiral continues”

and I'm not talking about dedicated series that feature a wide range of cars – has perhaps had its day. That's no criticism of multi-marque racing, and it's vital that we continue to have grids featuring the diversity of cars that one-make contests simply cannot provide, but Allcomers races may not be the best avenue for this. In recent years, many such encounters have drawn slim grids and endured huge gaps between cars by the finish. It's inevitable that these races will string out, but that's why it is vital that they attract large entries, to ensure that those taking part have someone to battle against. If they don't, it essentially becomes a glorified trackday. Witnessing such limp affairs puts people off entering in the future, and the downward spiral continues.

This is a problem now more than ever because of the harsh economic reality clubs face in the wake of the coronavirus-

shortened 2020 season. Maximising entries has never been more important, and small Allcomers grids don't help. The increasingly expensive track time could be put to much better use.

These races do serve a clearer purpose in some instances, as they can act as a perfect trial ground for new cars seeking mileage. Scott Mittell recently dominated two Allcomers races at Brands Hatch in his new Mittell Cars MC-41RR (winning both by over 50 seconds), while two Ginetta G56s were among the slim and largely Caterham-populated entry at Silverstone the other week. But there are only a tiny number of new cars each year, and so this is not a major draw. Allcomers races could also be better suited to more unusual venues, where there is only limited action each year. Take the Open Sports and Saloon races at Thruxton at the start of July, which give the potential for drivers to compete at the Hampshire speedbowl who may not normally get the opportunity.

One event where Allcomers races are a traditional part of the timetable is the Walter Hayes Trophy. This is a fantastic meeting that, despite the chilly November weather, draws me back year after year as James Beckett always assembles a cracking line-up for the main Formula Ford 1600 knockout. And yet the Allcomers support races can leave you feeling especially cold. Over the past two years, four have been won by more than 20s – some double that. Again, you can't help but feel that adding a more established category to the itinerary could help. The Britcar Endurance Championship didn't really fit when it joined in 2017, but Historic FF2000 was perfect when it was on the bill in 2015. You don't want the supports to overshadow the main attraction, but there is the potential for better entertainment between the FF1600 bouts.

Over in Wales, even the prospect of a terribly dull Allcomers race seems mouthwatering. Motorsport still has not restarted in the country, and the devolved Welsh government's failure to understand the situation is getting more baffling by the day. Yes, caution is needed when responding to an unpredictable pandemic, but the fact that hundreds of events have successfully taken place across the border should surely prompt a rethink. You have to feel for the Welsh venues – the longer the ban on meetings continues, the worse the impact will be on motorsport in the country.

In happier news, English spectators returned to the grass banks from Brands Hatch to Oulton Park last weekend – and for the first time in over a year to Silverstone. It is a glorious step towards normality, but we must remember that an average club fixture is never going to pull in the crowds. As Marcus Pye pointed out on these pages last week, for many events the marshals are the primary spectators. And, to go full circle, watching a small grid of strung-out Allcomers cars is not particularly enticing for them, either. ❧



Igoe Keen to show that preparation has paid off

BRANDS HATCH
BRITISH GT
23 MAY

Michael Igoe and Phil Keen made a dream start to their British GT title assault with a comfortable victory at Brands Hatch. Their WPI Motorsport Lamborghini Huracan was never challenged once Igoe hit the front on lap six, leaving Keen with the relatively simple job of stroking home to a 9.6-second victory over four-time champion Jonny Adam in the polesitting Beechdean AMR Aston Martin Vantage started by Andrew Howard.

“Michael has been driving really well, we’ve worked really hard over the winter with his driving and with the team running through routines to make

sure that when we arrived here we’re ready to go,” said Keen, who switched from fellow Lamborghini squad Barwell Motorsport over the off-season. “It was fairly stress-free, I just had to monitor the gap to Jonny and that’s it.”

Igoe’s second British GT win, after a breakthrough success alongside Andrea Caldarelli at a wet Donington Park last year, served as a warning shot to the rest of the grid that he will be a tough man to beat.

“It wasn’t about trying to get the fastest lap out there,” he said. “It was just keeping focused on the job in hand. We had a nice comfortable lead, it wasn’t a pressurised drive on my behalf, so [it was] just [about] keeping it all together and bringing the car back.”

The heavens opened as the cars made

their way to the grid, but everybody stuck with slicks for the start – which was delayed after debutant Morgan Tillbrook (Enduro Motorsport McLaren) crashed on the first of two planned formation laps at Westfield. The safety car remained out for a further three tours before two-time champion Howard led the field away, but Igoe was more confident in the conditions and made a committed pass at Druids.

“He was quicker than me in that phase of the race,” said Howard. “Darren Turner always taught me, ‘Pick your battles’ and that wasn’t one to fight.”

Igoe added: “I had more pace than Andrew, so it was just about working out where was going to be the best place for me to make the move.”

But he wasn’t able to pull away

GINETTA MISSES OUT ON COMEBACK WIN AS GT4 SUPERCUP GRADUATES TAKE THE SPOILS

Ginetta was denied a dream return to British GT at Brands Hatch as its new G56 run by Assetto Motorsport suffered a puncture just five laps from home, handing victory to the polesitting Century Motorsport BMW M4.

Benefiting from a glut of safety cars that meant the leading Silver cars could not negate a 26-seconds longer pitstop, Pro-Am pairing Charlie Robertson and Mark Sansom had been odds on for the Leeds marque’s first series win since Rockingham 2018 when the left-rear tyre blew.

“I must have caught a bit of debris, I was really trying not to run any of the kerbs too

excessively,” said a disappointed Robertson. “All I had to do was bring it home, that’s what I was gutted about. These are the days that are a bit tough to swallow in terms of the result.”

As the Ginetta plummeted to fourth, Gus Burton and Will Burns gratefully accepted the gift to lead a Century 1-2 ahead of Pro-Am class winners Chris Salkeld and Andrew Gordon-Colebrooke, but had to work hard to get it.

The leading pair in the 2020 Ginetta GT4 Supercup lived up to their billing as pre-season favourites by qualifying 0.897s clear of the field and Burns led throughout the opening stint – at one point running ahead of GT3 tail-ender

Mike Brown on merit. After Will Moore’s Academy Ford Mustang dropped out with broken suspension courtesy of Stewart Proctor’s GT3 McLaren, Richard Williams moved up to second in the Steller Audi, followed by James Kell (Team Rocket RJN McLaren), Sansom and Salkeld – having survived contact with John Ferguson at Hawthorn that spun the Speedworks Toyota into retirement.

But the safety car resulting from James Cottingham and Adam Balon’s tangle left Burns only 11 minutes before the pit window opened in which to pull a gap – “Will did a cracking job but can’t work a miracle,” said Century boss

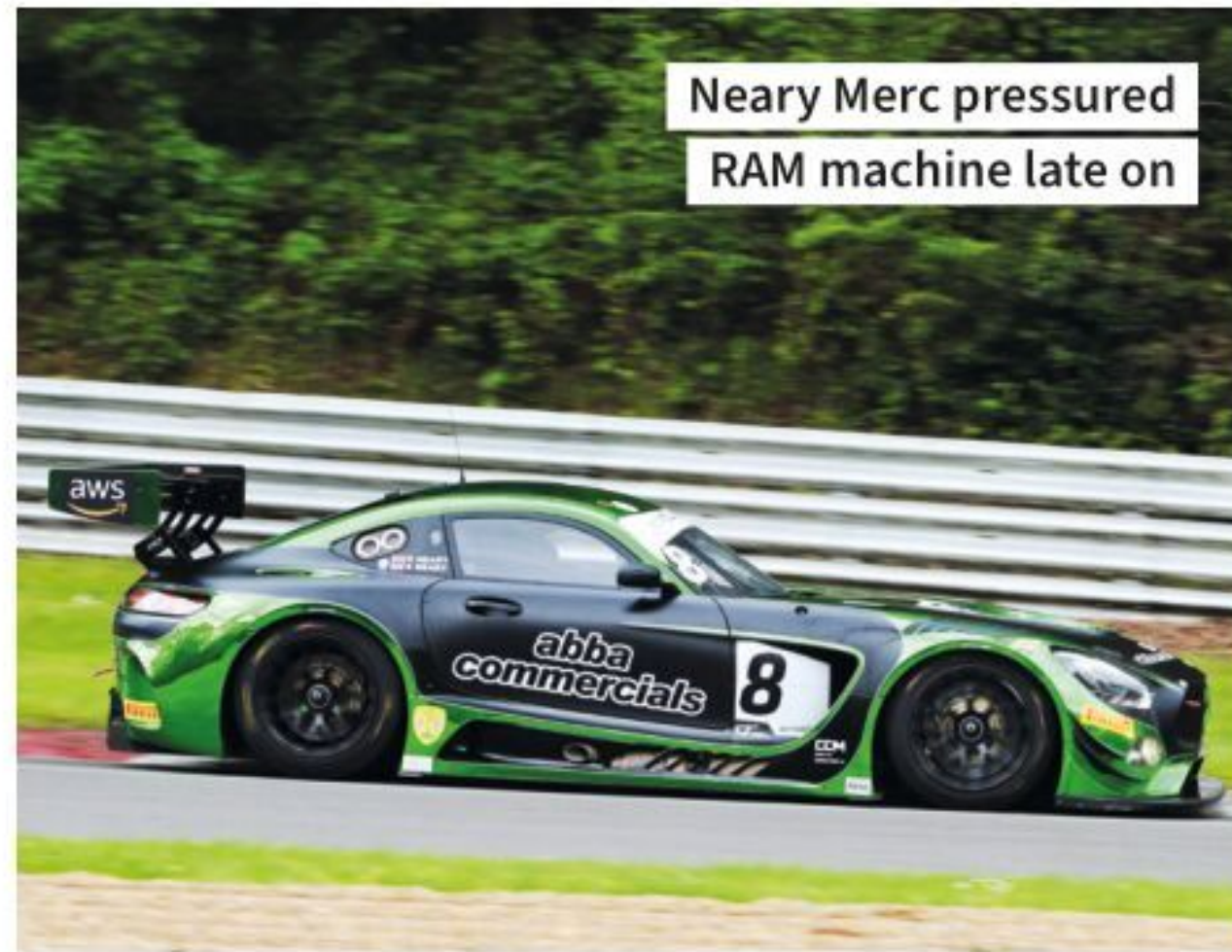


decisively from Howard, and the gap fluctuated around the 1-1.5s mark until a stroke of good fortune came his way.

Just before the safety car was called on lap 25 – the result of James Cottingham’s overly-optimistic lunge on Adam Balon at Paddock Hill Bend that left both cars in the gravel – Igoe had put a lap on Ashley Marshall’s GT4 McLaren. With the Balfe car between himself and Howard for the restart on lap 29, Igoe was immediately two seconds to the good as they crossed the timing line, while Howard came under attack from 2006 GT3 champ Leo Machitski (Barwell) and had to give best at Surtees.

Igoe’s lead grew to just over four seconds before handing over to Keen on lap 38, with the latter’s job made easier by a GPS issue delaying Dennis Lind (in for Machitski). The Dane emerged fourth, behind Adam and the RAM Racing Mercedes of Yelmer Buurman that had quietly risen up the order during Ian Loggie’s stint.

But it wasn’t long before the reigning Pro-Am champion was coming under heavy pressure from Lind and, on lap 57, he took advantage of Harry Hayek’s Team Rocket RJN GT4 McLaren delaying Buurman slightly on the exit of Hawthorn to dive up the inside at Westfield. Once in clear air, Lind immediately set about closing on Adam and caught him with two laps to go, but his stirring charge went



unrewarded as he finished 0.335s in arrears.

“I was basically driving blind trying to catch something I could not see,” explained Lind, who was almost 10s behind Adam when he first grabbed third. “In the end I could see him, but I used the tyres quite vigorously so I didn’t have much left.”

Howard, though, was elated with second, having only made two appearances last year. His stated aim of a third title looks entirely feasible. “You’ve got no idea when you’ve been out of it for 18 months what your pace is going to be,” he said. “If you look back over the beginning of the season in all the championships we’ve done, we’ve always had a poor start and then gathered momentum. Hopefully this year we can start a little stronger and keep that momentum up.”

Buurman staved off pressure from fellow Merc runner Sam Neary (Team ABBA) to finish fourth, while Scott Malvern was a distant sixth in the Team Parker Racing Porsche he shared with Nick Jones.

In his first race outing since clinching the 2019 GT4 Pro-Am title, Kelvin Fletcher was left to rue passing Hayek’s co-driver Katie Milner before the timing line at a restart, copping a drivethrough penalty that dropped the JRM Bentley he shared with Martin Plowman down to seventh, having run a strong fourth early on.

JAMES NEWBOLD

WEEKEND WINNERS

GT3

(77 laps) 1 Michael Igoe/Phil Keen (Lamborghini Huracan Evo); 2 Andrew Howard/Jonny Adam (Aston Martin Vantage) +9.614s; 3 Leo Machitski/Dennis Lind (Lamborghini); 4 Ian Loggie/Yelmer Buurman (Mercedes-AMG); 5 Richard Neary/Sam Neary (Mercedes); 6 Nick Jones/Scott Malvern (Porsche 911 GT3-R). **Fastest lap** Lind 1m24.964s (103.10mph). **Pole** Howard/Adam. **Starters** 14.

Points 1 Igoe/Keen 37.5; 2 Howard/Adam 27; 3 Machitski/Lind 22.5; 4 Loggie/Buurman 18; 5 Neary/Neary 15; 6 Jones/Malvern 12.

GT4

(73 laps) 1 Will Burns/Gus Burton (BMW M4); 2 Chris Salkeld/Andrew Gordon-Colebrooke (BMW) +12.084s; 3 James Kell/Jordan Collard (McLaren 570S); 4 Mark Sansom/Charlie Robertson (Ginetta G56); 5 Richard Williams/Sennan Fielding (Audi R8 LMS); 6 Nick Halstead/Jamie Stanley (McLaren).

FL Robertson 1m32.197s (95.01mph).

P Burns/Burton. **S** 12.

Points 1 Burns/Burton 37.5; 2 Salkeld/Gordon-Colebrooke 27; 3 Kell/Collard 22.5; 4 Sansom/Robertson 18; 5 Williams/Fielding 15; 6 Halstead/Stanley 12.



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Nathan Freke – and when he finally took over four laps after his rivals’ stops, Burton was down to third behind Robertson and Gordon-Colebrooke.

As Robertson streaked away, Freke admitting “we didn’t have an answer” for him, the two Century cars engaged in a battle royal behind. Gordon-Colebrooke firmly slammed the door at Druids before Burton made the decisive pass around the outside of Paddock Hill Bend.

After taking over from Williams, Sennan Fielding was hit with a drivethrough for an unsafe release, promoting Kell and Jordan Collard to a lonely third.

JAMES NEWBOLD



First blow to O'Sullivan in British F3 bout

BRANDS HATCH

MSVR

22-23 MAY

Series rookie Zak O'Sullivan stayed out of trouble and laid a claim to the BRDC British Formula 3 Championship crown by leaving the opening round at Brands Hatch with the points lead.

The Carlin driver was left disappointed to start down in third for the opener, believing a decision not to put new tyres on in qualifying after a red flag period cost him a chance of pole, while Ayrton Simmons returned to the category in fine form with pole and the fastest ever qualifying lap for BRDC British F3 machinery around the Grand Prix loop.

With overtaking notoriously difficult at the Kent venue, the opening encounter turned into a procession. Chris Dittmann Racing driver Simmons came out on top from impressive debutant Oliver Bearman (Fortec Motorsport) and O'Sullivan, the front three comfortably clear of Hitech GP duo Bart Horsten and Reece Ushijima.

Horsten, in his second full season of British F3, made the best getaway from third on the grid in race two and got between O'Sullivan and Simmons on the run to Paddock Hill Bend. Having secured second, he made an attempt around the outside of Simmons at Druids, but the pair made contact, with Simmons landing on top of Horsten's machine and leaving both out of the race. Simmons was deemed at fault and was handed a grid penalty for the next round (see news).

The collision between two likely title protagonists left the way clear for another challenger, O'Sullivan, to win from Bearman, with Ushijima completing the podium.

A tweaked format for 2021 meant the starting order for race three was a reversal of the qualifying times, with points still on offer for each position gained, leaving



Reema Juffali and Max Marzorati on the front row. Marzorati made the best start, but he and Juffali made contact approaching Paddock, allowing Christian Mansell to sweep into the lead after an incredible start from seventh on the grid. Then the safety car was deployed to retrieve Sebastian Alvarez's Hitech-run Tatuus from the Paddock gravel.

Another safety car was called shortly after the restart when 2020 F3 Cup runner-up Alex Fores ran into the back of Juffali at Stirlings, putting them both out, but Carlin racer Mansell remained unchallenged once racing resumed. Javier Sagrera took second and a maiden podium for Elite Motorsport on the squad's British F3 debut, with rookie Dexter Patterson finishing third for Douglas Motorsport.

O'Sullivan charged through from 17th on the grid to finish seventh, ahead of Horsten and Bearman, while Simmons managed 13th. "I'm more happy with the last race than even the win," said O'Sullivan. "The win was gifted, I don't see it as a proper win, but in race three we really showed our pace. There's still a bit of work to do as always,

but I'm very content with the weekend."

O'Sullivan leads the standings by four points from Bearman, who only plans to compete part-time in the championship this year with his continental F4 commitments taking priority, while Ushijima sits third a further 13 points back.

Theo Edgerton extended his lead in the Porsche Sprint Challenge GB, but missed out on maintaining his 100% winning record. He took victory in race one, his cause aided when a chasing Jack Bartholomew spun off at Hawthorns as light rain hit the track. Ethan Hawkey and Charles Clark completed the podium. Edgerton dropped the ball at the start of race two, falling into the midst of the pack as he failed to get off the line when the lights went out. He reclaimed the lead by lap five but another mistake, this time running wide into the Clearways gravel, allowed Bartholomew through to win. Hawkey took another podium.

Eric Boulton put in a sensational drive aboard his Honda Civic to win the Classic Sports Car Club's Tin Tops race, scything through from eighth on a damp track to lead by lap two. Jonathan Hunter, sharing a Renault Clio 172 Cup with Rob Jarman, was hunting him down before the race was red-flagged with five minutes left.

Josh Steed moved to the head of the GT5 Challenge standings after taking two wins and a further podium across the three races. John Bennett, points leader going into the event, lost an on-the-road win in the opener after passing under yellow flags, but kept the victory second time out. A sprinkling of rain caught him out in race three and he found the barriers at Hawthorns. Marc Warren took a clean sweep of concurrent G40 Cup wins.

STEFAN MACKLEY



Edgerton (centre) was the man to beat in Porsches, but only took the one victory



A win and further podium gives O'Sullivan points lead after first round

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: JEP
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IMAGES

WEEKEND WINNERS

BRDC BRITISH F3

Race 1 (12 laps) 1 Ayrtton Simmons (below); 2 Oliver Bearman +1.207s; 3 Zak O'Sullivan; 4 Bart Horsten; 5 Reece Ushijima; 6 Frederick Lubin. **Fastest lap** Simmons 1m20.832s (108.37mph). **Pole** Simmons. **Starters** 19.
Race 2 (10 laps) 1 O'Sullivan; 2 Bearman +2.248s; 3 Ushijima; 4 Lubin; 5 Alex Connor; 6 Roberto Faria. **FL** O'Sullivan 1m20.808s (108.40mph). **P** Simmons. **S** 19.
Race 3 (12 laps) 1 Christian Mansell; 2 Javier Sagrera +1.991s; 3 Dexter Patterson; 4 Bryce Aron; 5 Mikkel Grundtvig; 6 Ushijima. **FL** Ushijima 1m21.799s (107.08mph). **P** Reema Juffali. **S** 19.
Points 1 O'Sullivan 78; 2 Bearman 74; 3 Ushijima 61; 4 Mansell 50; 5 Lubin 45; 6 Simmons 44.

PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

Race 1 Theo Edgerton
Race 2 Jack Bartholomew

TIN TOPS

Eric Boulton (Honda Civic)

GINETTA GT5 CHALLENGE & G40 CUP

Races 1 & 3 Josh Steed
Race 2 John Bennett

GINETTA GT ACADEMY

Races 1, 2 & 3 Toby Trice



For full results visit: [tsl-timing.com](https://www.tsl-timing.com)

A NEW ERA BEGINS FOR GINETTA



A thrilling final corner, last-lap overtake for victory, close battles throughout the field, mixed weather and even some safety car confusion. The first event for Ginetta's new championship, the GT Academy, certainly didn't lack entertainment at Brands Hatch last weekend.

The series is an entry-level category into GT racing for those either already with racing experience or complete rookies, with competitors able to get behind the wheel of a new Ginetta G56A capable of producing 270bhp.

Despite his relative lack of experience – just one season of Ginetta Racing Drivers Club action under his belt – Toby Trice was firmly the dominant driver across the inaugural three races.

The first contest got under way beneath dark clouds, and a heavy downpour greeted the drivers for their opening laps. Polesitter Trice revelled in the conditions, opening up a lead of several seconds from fellow front-row starter Roy Alderslade.

The safety car was then called to retrieve a stricken car on the exit of Druids and, after two more racing laps, it was back out again, although the laps at racing speed had allowed Lee Frost to get into second from seventh on the grid. The race ended under unusual circumstances though, as the safety car "left its lights on

and went into the pits" according to Trice who, as SC boards and yellow flags were still being shown around the circuit, was left to act as the pace car for the final lap to take the opening win, followed home by Frost, Alderslade and Gilbert Yates as top rookie in fourth.

Trice's bid for a second win was also anything but straightforward. Starting from pole, but this time in the dry, he got too much wheelspin off the line and dropped to second as Alderslade took to the front. After another mid-race safety car, Trice tried for a pass into Paddock, but left the door open for Angus Whiteside to dive up the inside into second.

Any hopes of a victory looked to have faded for Trice heading onto the final tour but, incredibly, he overtook Whiteside into Surtees before diving up the inside of Alderslade into Clark Curve for a sensational win. Alderslade's loss of momentum allowed Whiteside into second and top rookie, with Ravi Ramyeed almost taking the final podium spot.

Ramyeed's moment to shine came in race three, as he surged through from fourth on the grid to grab the lead. But Trice was unrelenting in his pressure and, with grip compromised at Stirlings due to dropped fluids, Ramyeed ran wide on the penultimate lap, allowing Trice to complete his hat-trick.

"My goal is to become a GT driver in GT3 and I think this platform gives me the conditions to learn a GT car, so hopefully when I step up it will just be a case of getting used to a bit more power and slicks," said Trice.

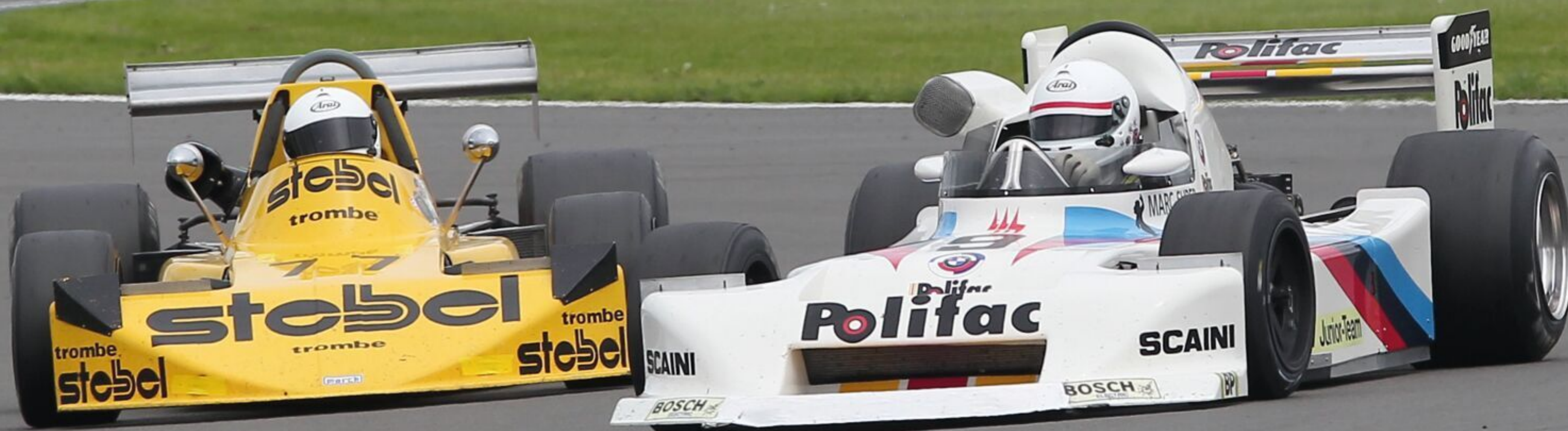
"They're quite different to the G40s. On the throttle it's more aggressive and they are quicker through the corners. I think Ginetta have built a fantastic machine."

STEFAN MACKLEY



Trice took a hat-trick at inaugural GT Academy event

As Griffiths raced clear, Watts (r) and Smith had good tussle in second F2 contest



Griffiths' brace as F2 battle rages behind

SILVERSTONE
HSCC
22-23 MAY

Two magnificent drives by Miles Griffiths earned a memorable Historic Formula 2 double as the Historic Sports Car Club's International Trophy retrospective centred on the BRDC's European championship rounds of the 1970s. Unfeasibly charismatic cars and shrill two-litre engine notes brought Silverstone's Grand Prix circuit alive, but it was the field's depth and intensity of battling throughout that enthralled spectators, back for the first time in more than a year.

Griffiths, Classic F3 ace Andy Smith, Historic Formula Fordster Cameron Jackson and Thundersports standout Calum Lockie – whose reactions in a savagely powerful 8.8-litre March in dry and wet conditions defied marshals' comprehension – were among the competitors at the top of their game. Such mastery was reflected across the host club's portfolio of grids. The quality of cars, including three Le Mans veterans, in Sunday's guest GT & Sports Car Cup enduro was another talking point.

Griffiths qualified Philip Walker's Ralt RT1 quickest on a damp track, but fellow Midlander Smith lapped 0.663 seconds slower in his March 742, with Rob

Wheldon (762), Matt Wrigley (ex-Giacomo Agostini Chevron B42) and Manfredo Rossi di Montelera (762) well in touch in the 29-strong pack. Former champion Matthew Watts, first time out in his Marc Surer 782, sat ninth after damaging its nose, while Martin Stretton didn't get a lap in when his now BDG-powered 712's fuel metering unit seized.

Smith went after Griffiths from the rolling start, but a flat battery-induced misfire forced early retirement. Wrigley took up the cudgels, but Historic F1 racer Rossi screamed up to second, taking Frazer Gibney (ex-Wink Bancroft Chevron B40) with him. Recovering from a moment, Wrigley fought back past Gibney for second, with Rossi and the shadowing Glenn Eagling (ex-Reine Wisell GRD 273) within three seconds of him.

Sunday's stanza was no less gripping – with Wheldon, Smith and Stretton charging from the back, fireworks were guaranteed. Griffiths was clear of Rossi and Gibney within three laps, but Watts rose confidently from sixth to fourth and, having worked hard to usurp team-mate Gibney, latched on to Rossi before diving past into Brooklands.

Smith and Stretton were on the warpath though and, while they displaced the Italian, Smith could not purge Watts's defences. Eight seconds behind Griffiths, whose engine had cut out intermittently,

Lockie's March was able to keep back Forward's McLaren



ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: WALKER



Garrad's Nissan defeated the Sierra Cosworths



Smith was a double Classic F3 winner



Lockie and Thomas upheld E-type honour in GTSCC

Watts and Smith finished 0.172s apart. Stretton, Rossi and Gibney completed the top six. Donington's overall winner Callum Grant and giant-slayer Marc Mercer, Sunday's top 1600cc finisher, shared FAtlantic honours in March 79B and 73B respectively.

In his Historic FF1600 Merlyn Mk20, Grant was too busy scrapping with Linton Stutely (Royale), Ben Mitchell and Horatio Fitz-Simon (Merlyns) to prevent fellow double champion Cameron Jackson escaping in his Winkelmann on Saturday. Grant finished second with young Horatio abreast over the line. Mitchell got closer to Jackson on Sunday, reprising their 2018 seasons, but Fitz-Simon was alongside Mitchell at the chequer. Driving one of the Peco Lotus 59s, Dominik Jackson – Cam's brother who beat Sebastian Vettel on a few occasions in FBMW – nabbed fourth by 0.001s from Grant.

Super quick Andy Smith, now in his March 783, beat hard-tryers Benn Tilley (743) and Anthony Hancock (Lola T670) in both Classic F3 races, rewarding his support team, who sourced and replaced a split crankshaft oil seal for Sunday's outing. Murray Shepherd dominated the FF2000 section in Hancock's Van Diemen RF82.

Andy Newall (Chevron B6) led the 43-car Guards Trophy championship opener within a lap from Westie Mitchell

(B8) and Simon Jackson (Lenham P70). Mitchell snatched the initiative back into Copse, then ran wide and was repassed by the pair. Mitchell regained second before relaying son Ben, but Newall ran long to his stop and extended a 30s cushion over the Mitchells' Chevron, German Nikolaus Killenberg's in 1968.

Following Greg Thornton's (B8) exclusion for running Avon tyres instead of the mandatory Dunlops, Richard Piper (Brahma) was accorded third ahead of the Lotus 23B of 1996 Formula Vauxhall Euroseries runner-up Goncalo Gomes and James Claridge. John Spiers's TVR Griffith was first GT to the chequer, but a 90s penalty for a short stop dropped him to third in class behind Mike Whitaker and Peter Thompson's similar cars. Despite losing power, John Davison topped the Elan posse in which Will Schryver's partner Marcus Weller overhauled Nick Powell for second.

Lockie won both Thundersports races – which attracted a great field – in the Dodkins brothers' March, Helmut Kelleners' 1970 Croft Interserie-winning 707, updated. After Warren Briggs had rotated his McLaren M8, Lockie beat the recovering McLaren of Dean Forward and tenacious period star John Burton (Chevron B26), who robbed Tony Sinclair (Lola T292) on the line in Saturday's race – punctuated by a safety car after contact from Nick

Sleep's Lola T70 fired Vic Nutter's Lola T296/7 into the wall at Maggotts on lap one. Forward kept Lockie occupied on Sunday after rain initially stopped play.

Later, Lockie converted Julian Thomas's start to victory in a superb GTSCC enduro. Thomas (Jaguar E-type low-drag coupe) and Roger Wills (ex-Bruce McLaren Lotus 15) traded places initially, but David Clark was 16s adrift at the close in the Lotus. In the E-type's 60th anniversary year, Graeme and James Dodd and Gary and John Pearson finished third and fourth in semi-lightweights, pursued by Sam Hancock/Gregor Fiskin in the latter's AC Cobra 39PH, which finished seventh at Le Mans in 1963.

Simon Garrad (Nissan Skyline) had the legs on the Ford Sierra Cosworths and Steve Soper (BMW M3) in the Dunlop Saloon Car Cup contests. Ford Falconer Dan Williamson won the Historic split from a separate grid, in which Mini men Bill Sollis, Dan Wheeler, David Ogden and Nick Paddy provided the excitement.

Morgan +8 racers Will Plant and Robin 'Canute' Pearce won the 70s and wet Historic Road Sports bouts. Recovering from spins at Copse and Village, new grandfather Kevin Kivlochan roared his AC Cobra back from last to second in the latter, with John Davison and Paul Tooms (Elans) in his mirrors.

MARCUS PYE

WEEKEND WINNERS

HISTORIC FORMULA 2

Races 1 & 2 Miles Griffiths (Ralt-BDG RT1)

HISTORIC FORMULA FORD 1600

Races 1 & 2 Cam Jackson (Winkelmann WDF2)

CLASSIC F3

Races 1 & 2 Andy Smith (March-Toyota 783)

GUARDS TROPHY

Andy Newall (Chevron-BMW B6)

THUNDERSPORTS

Races 1 & 2 Calum Lockie (March 717)

GT & SPORTS CAR CUP

Julian Thomas/Calum Lockie (Jaguar E-type)

DUNLOP SALOON CAR CUP

Races 1 & 2 Simon Garrad (Nissan Skyline R32)

70s ROAD SPORTS

William Plant (Morgan +8)

HISTORIC ROAD SPORTS

Robin Pearce (Morgan +8)

AURORA TROPHY

Race 1 Michael Lyons (Lola-Chevrolet T400)

Race 2 Mark Dwyer (March-BDG 742)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Frantic MR2 races produce four from four

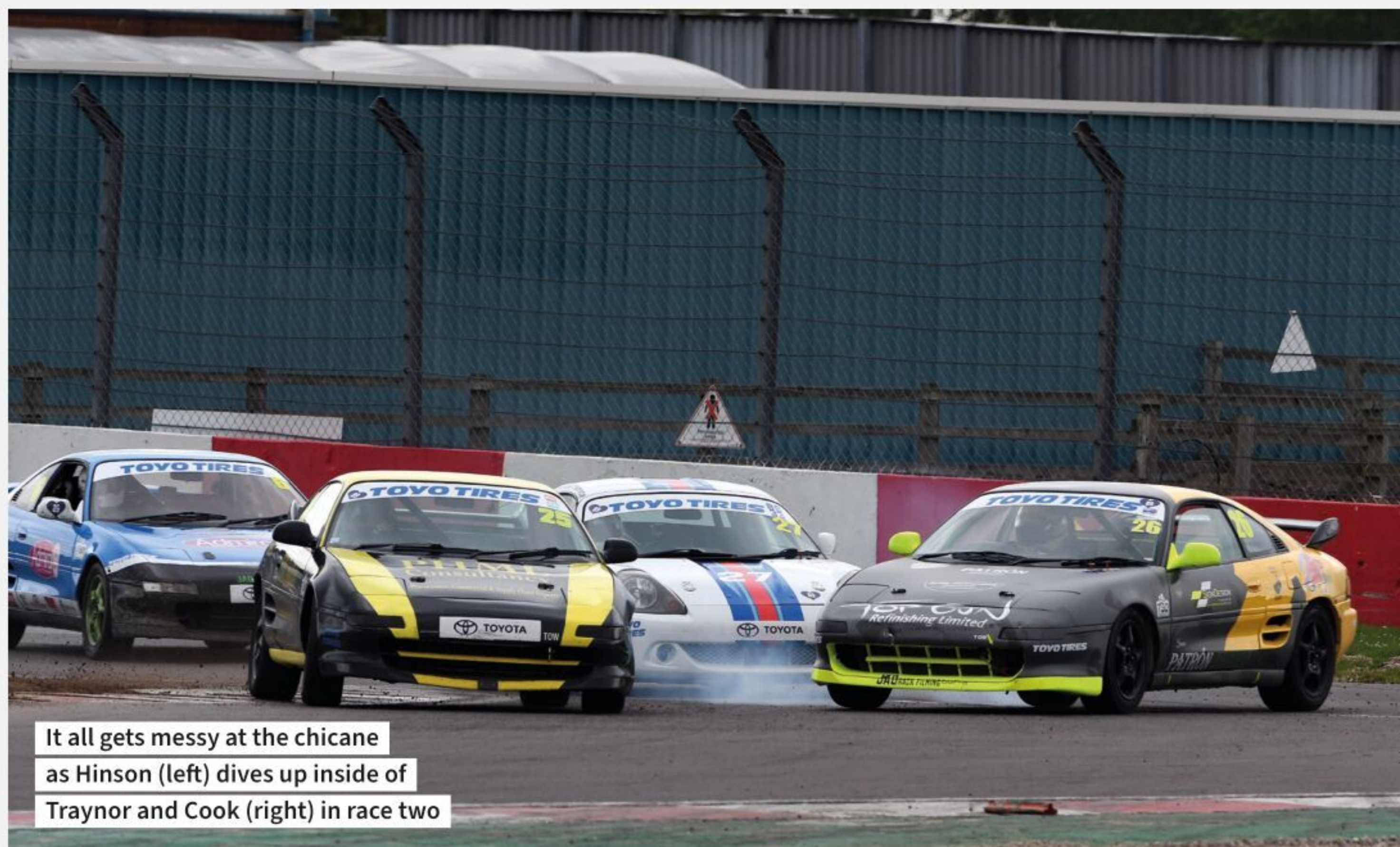
DONINGTON PARK
750MC
22-23 MAY

Shaun Traynor and Paul Hinson made it four different winners from the first four races of the MR2 Championship season by triumphing at Donington Park.

Hinson was one of a number of drivers to be delayed at the first corner of race one, when the track was at its greasiest. A quartet survived in the lead group, with Nick Williamson ahead initially before multiple champion Traynor grabbed the advantage at Coppice on lap two. The Roadster driver held sway almost throughout, but Cam Walton and Aaron Cooke each briefly headed a lap.

Hinson climbed from ninth to fourth in the opener, but began the later race second. Outgunned at the start, he found himself back in fourth, then went from third to first when he dived up the inside of Paul Cook and Traynor at the chicane, Cook spinning out of the top 10. Cooke, who survived a big moment at the Craners on lap three, bounced back to finish second, aided when Traynor went off at Coppice on the penultimate tour.

The first ever Classic Stock Hatch



It all gets messy at the chicane as Hinson (left) dives up inside of Traynor and Cook (right) in race two

triple-header yielded three different winners, including a brand-new one as Ben Bateman triumphed on his first ever circuit racing weekend. It was a tremendous comeback from an ignominious start for the oval racing convert, who missed third gear off the line in race one and pulled his hired Vauxhall Nova off, although fears of terminal damage were unfounded.

Bateman climbed to sixth in race two, giving him a solid slot from which to start the finale, during which light rain fell. Unbeknown to Bateman, on-the-road leader Ryan Morgan had a 10-second jumped-start penalty and the pair had a fantastic scrap,

with others sometimes involved. Although Morgan's Ford Fiesta XR2 took the 'lead' at Redgate on the final lap, Bateman dragged ahead on the run to the line.

In the earlier races, multiple champion Lee Scott took victory in his Fiesta XR2i pursued by Stewart Place's Peugeot 205, with the pair swapping roles in race two.

Racing laps were in short supply in the second F1000 event of the season, during which Elliott Mitchell protected his points advantage over Matthew Booth. Booth, the 2019 champion, ousted Dan Gore for the lead at the chicane on lap two of the first race, with Mitchell passing Gore just before

Burgess fails to end Kirkpatrick's unbeaten streak

OULTON PARK
MGCC
22 MAY

Sam Kirkpatrick came from behind to maintain his 100% record in this year's MG Trophy after two close tussles with Fred Burgess at Oulton Park.

Kirkpatrick led the opener from pole, but had his two-second advantage wiped out by a mid-race safety car. Burgess kept

the pressure on for the two-lap dash to the chequered flag but was unable to find a way past, rueing his combination of a wet set-up with slick tyres on a track that had almost completely dried.

Burgess got the jump on Kirkpatrick at the start of the sequel but, after both cleared the even-faster-starting Class B ZR 170 of Fergus Campbell, who was third overall in race one, Burgess was unable to break away. Kirkpatrick edged alongside several times before making his move stick with a lunge into Cascades.

Roles now reversed, Kirkpatrick couldn't shake off Burgess as the pair traded lap records, eventually separated by 0.6s at the flag. "I had to fight for that one," smiled Kirkpatrick. "I got a bit closer through Cascades than I normally would, so I let off the brakes and hoped!" Adam Jackson was third, a fine recovery from an earlier engine fire caused by a split oil filter housing.

Ollie Neaves also remains unbeaten in 2021 after claiming both BCV8 races,

but he needed some good fortune in the opener after twice making the wrong call on tyres. Running dry rubber on a greasy track in qualifying left him fifth on the grid, then switching to wets for the race also proved the wrong decision.

After seeing off the similarly shod James Wheeler for third, Neaves was handed second when Neil Fowler ran wide on the final lap, which became victory when first-on-the-road Simon Cripps was penalised for jumping a restart. Cripps's terrific pace was such that he fell just 0.23s short of overcoming the 10s penalty in only three green-flag laps. Neaves was untouchable in race two, taking a clear win from Cripps and Wheeler.

Ray Collier used his wet-weather skills to put his MG ZR 190 on pole position by over 4s for the Cockshoot Cup's first event of the season. Dry conditions for the races better suited the MG Midget of Keith Egar, whose tyre gamble had left him 13th on both grids, and he twice



Holme won Equipe races in MGB and Austin-Healey

WEEKEND WINNERS

DONINGTON PARK

TOYOTA MR2s

Race 1 Shaun Traynor (Roadster)

Race 2 Paul Hinson (Mk2)

CLASSIC STOCK HATCH

Race 1 Lee Scott (Ford Fiesta XR2i)

Race 2 Stewart Place (Peugeot 205 GTi)

Race 3 Ben Bateman (Vauxhall Nova GTE)

F1000

Race 1 Matthew Booth

Race 2 Elliott Mitchell

HOT HATCH

Races 1 & 2 Alistair Camp (Honda Civic)

HISTORIC 750 FORMULA

Scratch & Handicap Races

Richard Prior (JGS III)

MA7DA

Race 1 Jonathan Lisseter

Race 2 Daniel Sibbons

750 FORMULA

Races 1 & 2 David Bartholomew (PRS 1b)

SPORTS SPECIALS

Race 1 Paul Boyd (Eclipse SM1)

Race 2 Andy Hiley (Chronos HR1S)

ALFA ROMEOS

Races 1 & 2 Barry McMahon (156)

CLIO 182s

Races 1, 2 & 3 Jack Kingsbury

BMW CAR CLUB RACING

Races 1 & 2 Brad Sheehan (E46 M3)

116 TROPHY

Anthony Seddon/Alan Corfield

For full results visit: 750mc.co.uk

OULTON PARK

MG TROPHY

Races 1 & 2 Sam Kirkpatrick (ZR 190)

BCV8

Races 1 & 2 Ollie Neaves (B GTV8)

MG CUP & MG METRO CUP

Race 1 Mike Williams (Rover Metro VVC)

Race 2 Morgan Short (MG ZS 180)

COCKSHOOT CUP

Races 1 & 2 Ray Collier (MG ZR 190)

EQUIPE PRE '63 & '50s

Mark Holme (Austin-Healey 3000 Mk2)

EQUIPE GTS

Mark Holme (MGB)

EQUIPE LIBRE

Jamie Boot (TVR Griffith)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com



Bateman (left) had eventful circuit racing debut, grabbing a win after earlier DNF

a prolonged safety car period.

A restart was required for the reversed-grid race, from which double Silverstone winner Lee Morgan shot into the lead. Mitchell, who reckons his car is much better since a rebuild after rolling last season, took the lead on lap two and finished a second ahead of Booth, who swept ahead of Morgan at McLeans on the penultimate lap. Gore, meanwhile, popped a driveshaft at the initial getaway.

The Hot Hatch entry was oversubscribed, but enough dropped out after qualifying for reserve Alistair Camp to get into both races, and he was rewarded with two more

wins in his Honda Civic to add to his Cadwell double. The similarly mounted Ryan Polley and Philip Wright kept him reasonably honest. Double champion David Drinkwater continued to match Camp's record, taking two class wins in his BMW Compact.

Richard Prior is revelling in his switch from speed events to circuit racing, enjoying the thrill of overtaking and in particular dices with John Village in both Historic 750 Formula races. Prior's JGS III finished ahead of Village's eponymous car in both Scratch and Handicap bouts.

IAN SOWMAN



Kirkpatrick's Oulton wins weren't straightforward, amid Burgess's pressure

carved through the field. Collier prevailed by 1.4s in the opener, but Egar overcame his deficit to head race two, only for Collier to get a run and reclaim the lead into Shell Oils on the penultimate lap.

Morgan Short scored a maiden race win in the second MG Cup contest after two entertaining fights with Mike Williams, who outdragged polesitter Short's ZS up Clay Hill in race one. Learning his lesson, Short held his line in race two and Williams's Metro lost time running onto the grass. He clawed it back and was on Short's tail

after the leader collected a slowing car from the concurrent MG Metro Cup contest – twice dominated by Mark Eales – on the penultimate lap, but Short held firm.

Mark Holme was a double winner, his commanding Equipe Pre-'63 success following a victory in Equipe GTS gifted by Tom Smith's three-lap penalty for pitlane speeding. Smith had led Equipe Libre in customer Jon Hughes's similar MGB before a spin at Druids allowed Jamie Boot's TVR Griffith to scamper clear.

MARK PAULSON

GRAND PRIX GUIDE



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Treble top for Allen and Riley in Superkarts

MALLORY PARK
BRSCC
22 MAY

Although the entry was low, there was no shortage of action for the opening rounds of the Motorsport UK British Superkart Championships at Mallory Park. Ross Allen (Division 1) and Tom Riley (F125 Open) were unbeaten in their respective classes, with Allen almost taking three outright wins.

Allen battled with Carl Kinsey in the opener and the lead changed on several occasions. Kinsey led until five laps from the flag when he slowed with a misfiring engine and that allowed Allen back through.

Kirk Cattermole gained the upper hand over Lee Plain in the F250 National class with a decisive move at the hairpin, while Riley had an untroubled run to the flag in F125 Open and Mark Gellatly was top in F450 National. Allen then survived an excursion across the grass at Gerard's on the final lap as rain fell in race two but still took the Division 1 class win, while Plain pipped Gellatly at the flag to take overall victory.

Gellatly was the only driver to elect for slicks on a still damp track for the final race and promptly skated off at Gerard's. Allen took a commanding win after early leader Kinsey retired when a water hose came off. Cattermole was second until the final lap when he tripped over a backmarker at the Esses, handing the F250 win to Plain.

The Caterham Academy Green Group race was a thriller with six cars all in



Allen topped Division 1 in all three races but just missed out on hat-trick of overall wins

contention. Marc Jones moved up from eighth to contest the lead with Geoff Newman and they ran side-by-side before Jones dropped back slightly. At the flag it was a blanket finish with Newman just getting the verdict from Chris Fraser, Jones, and Mark Kendle. William James had an easy win among the White Group.

The Northern and Super Classic Formula Ford races also had their share of excitement. Nigel Dolan won the first encounter, but then struggled in the second race and it was George McDonald and ex-Superkart driver James Tucker who contested the lead. Tucker made a mistake at the hairpin while lapping a backmarker with two laps to go and that handed victory to McDonald's Swift.

GARY JAMES

MALLORY PARK WEEKEND WINNERS

MOTORSPORT UK BRITISH SUPERKARTS

Races 1 & 3 Ross Allen (Jade IAME)

Race 2 Lee Plain (Anderson DEA)

CATERHAM ACADEMY

Green Group Geoff Newman

White Group William James

NORTHERN & SUPER CLASSIC FORMULA FORD

Race 1 Nigel Dolan (Van Diemen JL012K)

Race 2 George McDonald (Swift SC92F)

TRACK ATTACK RACE CLUB

Race 1 Tony Hunter (Renault Clio)

Race 2 Andrew Neal (Peugeot 106 Rallye)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

BOURNE

Rain stops play on British Drag Racing championship's return

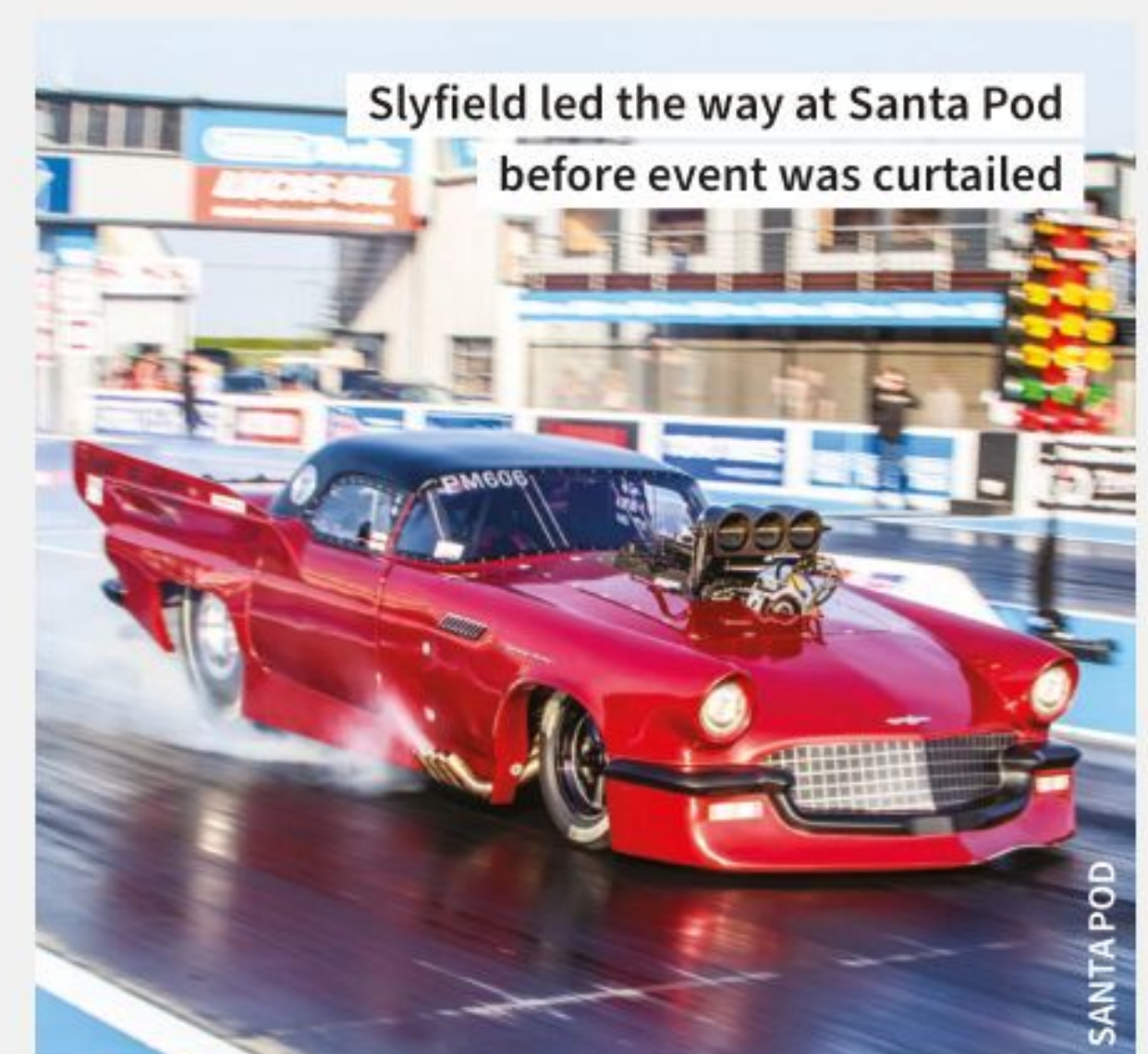
SANTA POD
BRITISH DRAG RACING
22-23 MAY

Drag racing is like cricket: rain stops play, and a resigned acceptance of this fact is ingrained into any understanding of either sport. Even so, it was dispiriting to find the resumption of the Motorsport UK British Drag Racing Championship, following a year's COVID-19 hiatus, blighted and curtailed by foul weather.

Three qualifying sessions had been scheduled for Saturday with eliminations due on Sunday at the Santa Pod series opener. In the event, one session took

place on Saturday with a second inserted into the Sunday programme before another downpour forced a halt with eliminations waiting to start.

Pro Modified has been the MSA/Motorsport UK championship class since 2007 and Nick Davies's turbocharged Pontiac Firebird is Britain's fastest-ever Pro Mod, at 249.05mph. But he was only third-quickest on the all-British entry list behind the supercharged entries of Kevin Slyfield and John Tebenham. Slyfield led the way after the two sessions, at 6.614s, ahead of Tebenham. Third-qualified Davies scored the meeting's top speed at 224.74mph.

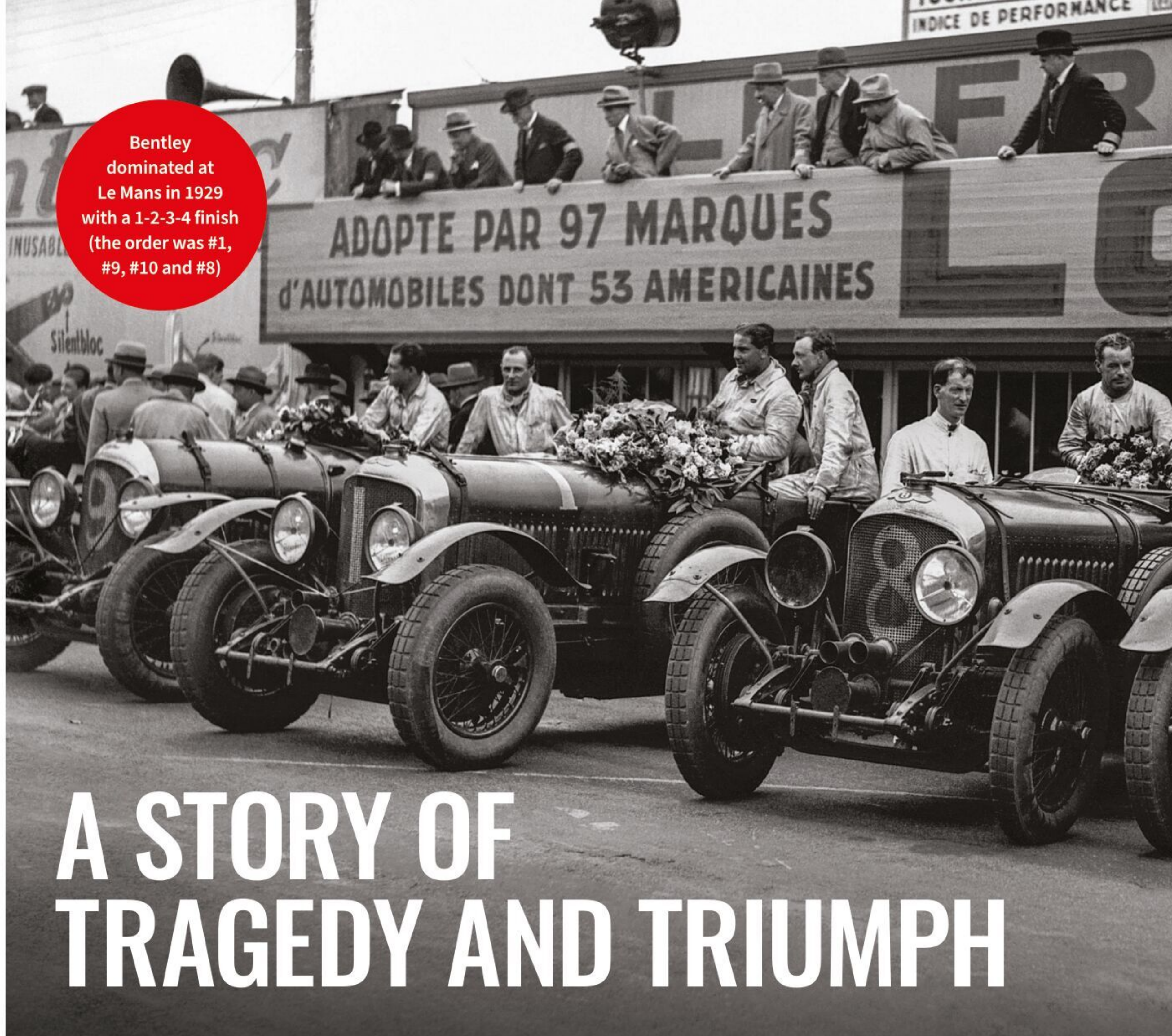


Slyfield led the way at Santa Pod before event was curtailed

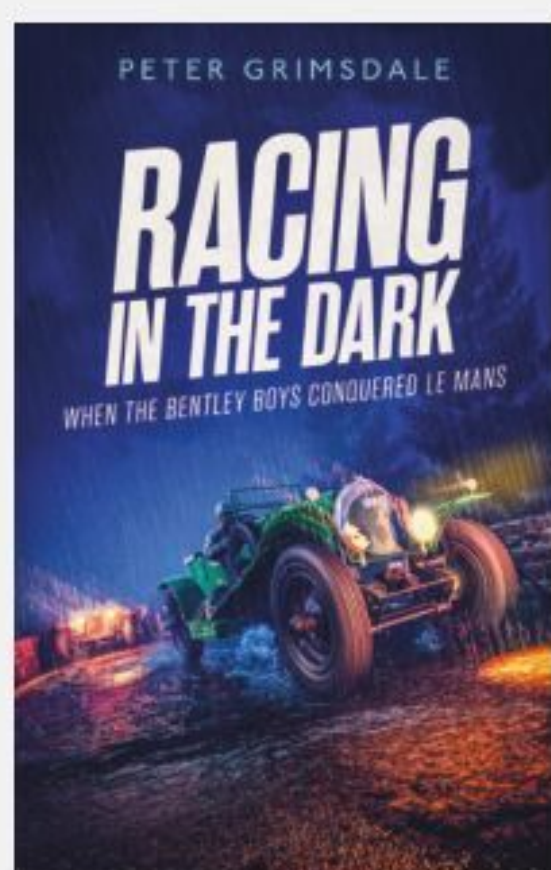
The meeting served chiefly as a cobweb-blower after extended competitive inactivity, and the racers will be impatient to raise the tempo next month for round two.

ROBIN JACKSON

Bentley dominated at Le Mans in 1929 with a 1-2-3-4 finish (the order was #1, #9, #10 and #8)



A STORY OF TRAGEDY AND TRIUMPH



BOOK REVIEW
RACING IN THE DARK:
WHEN THE BENTLEY BOYS
CONQUERED LE MANS
RRP £20

Porsche, Audi, Ferrari and Jaguar. All are synonymous with the Le Mans 24 Hours and between them the four manufacturers have close to 50 outright victories at La Sarthe.

But none of them were there from the very beginning, helping to put the French endurance classic on the motorsport map in the early part of the 20th century.

Between 1924 and 1930, Bentley won five times at Le Mans, and the British marque's remarkable rise and eventual fall during this period is charted in Peter Grimsdale's new book.

This isn't so much a blow-by-blow account of each race – in fact surprisingly little space is given to some of those Le Mans successes – but instead is a comprehensive look into the lives of those integral to the Bentley story and how they helped establish a legacy that is still revered today.

The early chapters are primarily dedicated to Walter Owen Bentley, from his efforts at developing an aluminium piston – which was an engineering breakthrough – to his work on aeroplane engines during the First World War.

His pursuit of building the perfect racing car led him to founding Bentley in 1919 and the British brand gained fame primarily due to its exploits at Le Mans

with the 'Bentley Boys'. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most coverage is given to the infamous White House incident in the 1927 Le Mans 24 Hours, when eight cars were involved in a crash, including all three Bentleys.

As Grimsdale points out, "had there been no White House crash, the likelihood is that the Bentley team might have cruised to the finish", but the incident and subsequent heroics of Sammy Davis and Dudley Benjafield to nurse their badly damaged car to victory helped both Bentley and the event gain wider recognition.

But the crash is just one detail of the book, and the main focus is on the goings-on away from the track – how Bentley struggled to keep afloat as WO left the running of the company to others, and how it was eventually bought by Woolf Barnato, who subsequently won three Le Mans on the bounce, before chief automotive rival Rolls-Royce took over the financially failing company.

The book comes to life with quotes from the memoirs of WO and Davis, alongside period articles from motoring publications.

It's not just the drivers who are given prime billing, but loyal mechanics such as Leslie Pennal and Walter Hassan, who began life with Bentley before becoming a distinguished engineer. Their anecdotes, which appear throughout, provide a unique insight into the personality of WO and other key players.

While there are many triumphs, it's also a story of tragedy, primarily the horrors of the First World War and how they affected each individual. Other global issues are given space, including the Wall



motorsport
IMAGES



L-r: 'Bentley Boys' Frank Clement, Leslie Callingham, Andre d'Erlanger, George Duller, Sammy Davis and John Benjafield

Street crash, and there is even a timely reminder that the COVID-19 pandemic is not the first virus to wreak havoc across the globe, as a few pages are given over to the Spanish flu pandemic of the late 1910s and Benjafield's medical work, which remains relevant to this day.

The book paints an authentic picture of the main protagonists, both their strengths and weaknesses, such as WO's lack of understanding or even care that his company was losing money, or that Barnato, while obviously quick and a good team player in the car, was very much a playboy out of it.

Bentley's is an incredible story of tragedy and triumph, and Grimsdale's book transports readers to a bygone era. It's well researched, informative and gripping enough to satisfy motorsport fans wishing to learn more about one of Britain's greatest manufacturers.

STEFAN MACKLEY

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Indianapolis 500

IndyCar

Round 6/16

Indianapolis, USA

30 May

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 1545

Extreme E

Round 2/5

Dakar, Senegal

29-30 May

TV Live BBC Red Button, Sat 1230, Sun 1525, Sky Sports Action, Sat 1230, Sun 1500, BT Sport 2, 1500, ITV, Sun 1500

GT World Challenge Endurance Cup

Round 2/5

Paul Ricard, France

29 May

Livestream on Motorsport.tv, Sat 1630

Formula Regional European by Alpine

Round 4/10

Paul Ricard, France

29-30 May

TCR Europe

Round 2/7

Paul Ricard, France

29-30 May

Livestream on Motorsport.tv, Sat 1315, Sun 1135

NASCAR Cup Series

Round 15/36

Charlotte, USA

30 May

TV Live Premier Sports 2, Sun 2230

NASCAR Xfinity Series

Round 12/33

Charlotte, USA

29 May

NASCAR Truck Series

Round 10/22

Charlotte, USA

28 May

Australian Supercars

Round 5/12

Winton, Australia

29-30 May

TV Live BT Sport ESPN, Sat 0630, Sun 0615, BT Sport 1, Sun 0230

MotoGP

Round 6/19

Mugello, Italy

30 May

TV Live BT Sport 2, Sun 1230

TV Highlights on BT Sport 3, Sun 1900, ITV4, Sun 2300

UK MOTORSPORT

Silverstone BARC

28-30 May

Citroen C1 24 Hours, MaX5, Caterhams (Sigma 135/Sigma 150/Sigmax), Sports Prototype Cup

Kirkistown 500MRCI*

29 May

FF1600, Fiestas/Mazda MX-5s, Roadsports, Saloons/GTs, Superkarts

Brands Hatch MSVR

29-30 May

Equipe Libre, Gentlemen Drivers, Masters Endurance Legends, Masters Historic F1, Masters Historic Sports Cars, Pre-'66 Minis, Pre-'66 Touring Cars

Donington Park CSCC

29-30 May

Classic K, Future Classics, Magnificent Sevens, Modern Classics, New Millennium, Open Series, Slicks Series, Special Saloons & Modsports, Swinging '60s, Tin Tops, Turbo Tin Tops

Croft 750MC

29-30 May

5Club MX-5s, Bikesports, Club Enduro, Formula Vee, Locost, Roadsports, Sports 1000, Type R Trophy

Castle Combe CCRC

31 May

FF1600, GTs, Hot Hatch Challenge, MGOC, Saloons, Sprites & Midgets, TCT/TCR

Donington Park BARC

31 May

CTCRC (BOSS/Thunder, JEC/Pre-'83, Pre-'66, Pre-'93/'03), Kumho BMWs, Mighty Minis

***Behind closed doors**



Scott Dixon will start from pole in Sunday's 105th Indianapolis 500



WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN

When a career-changing move goes begging

VERGERS IN THE BTCC

Ford started and ended its Super Touring era in the British Touring Car Championship on a high. But in the middle, it suffered a two-year winless nadir and slumped to last in the 1996 manufacturers' table. Yet Michael Vergers, beaten to drive that year's second Schubel-built Mondeo by Steve Robertson, doesn't view it as a bullet dodged.

His progress hindered by budget woes, 1990 British Formula Ford champion Vergers was still racing FFs in 1995. Third that year, he impressed sufficiently to win the *Motoring News* 'Ace of the Race' Award – a prize test in either Formula 3 or BTCC machinery. Without the funds for F3, he was added to Ford's Brands Hatch evaluation, but was overlooked by West Surrey Racing as 1994 Indy Lights champion Robertson and future BTCC race winner Warren Hughes were picked for the final evaluation at Pembrey.

"I'd never done F3 and obviously [WSR boss] Dick Bennetts is a Formula 3 person, so values that experience very highly," says Vergers. "On the day I drove, I ended up quickest so thought I had a bit of a chance, but it didn't have an impact."

Overlooked again for 1997 as Will Hoy

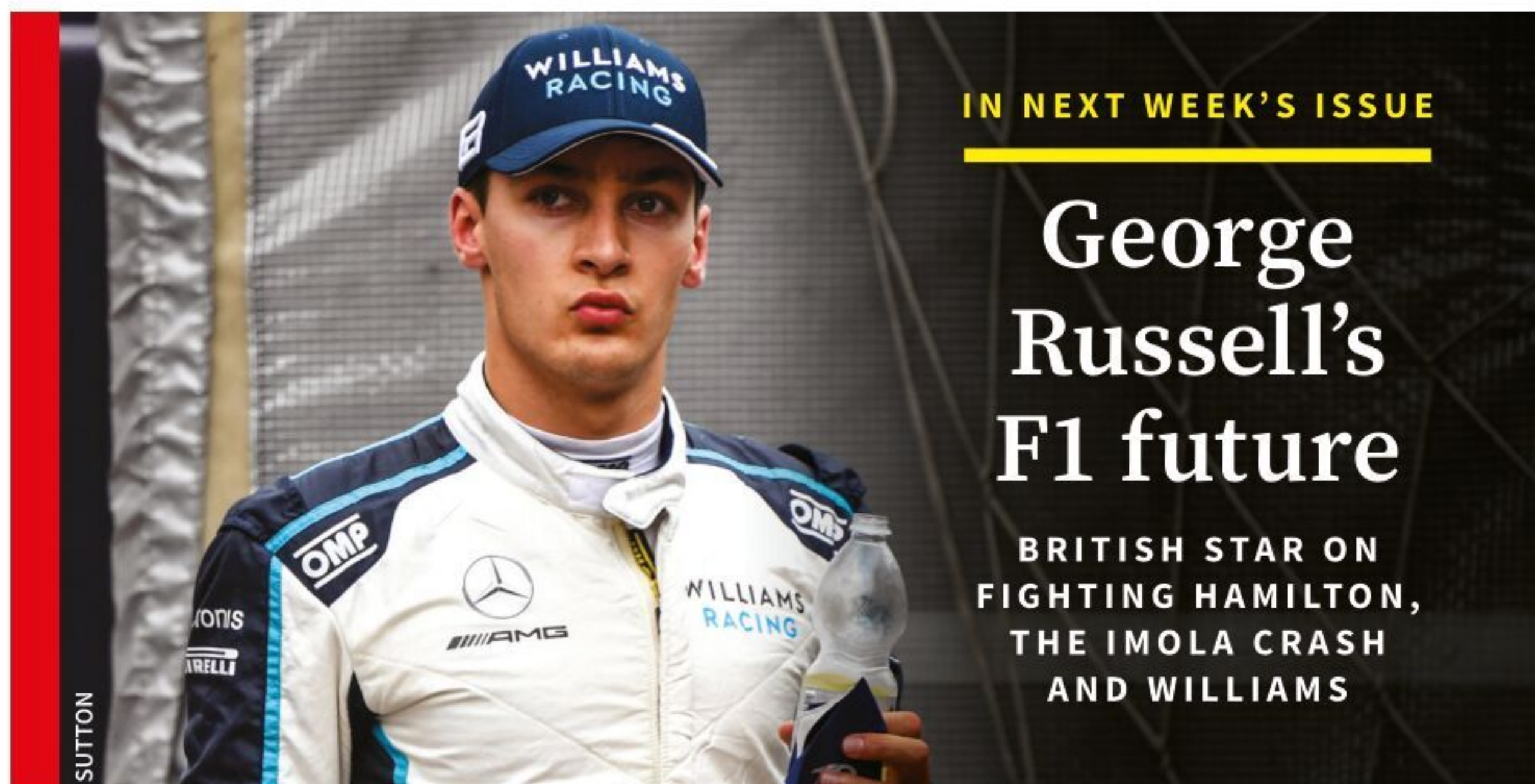
replaced Robertson, Vergers's BTCC aspirations were kept alive by his good relationship with then-Ford Motorsport boss Martin Whitaker. After testing the Blue Oval's historic fleet, the Dutchman was invited to a shakedown in "monsoon weather" at Croft, then deputised for Radisich at an official Brands Hatch test when the Kiwi returned home for his mother's funeral. Vergers was two tenths shy of 1991 champion Hoy in the new Reynard-built Mondeo after his fresh-tire run was aborted by red flags.

"It was fantastic to be involved," he says. "I was hoping Paul would stay [abroad] a little longer, but he came back."

Thoughts of replacing Peugeot-bound Radisich for 1998 came to naught, when WSR signed Craig Baird. Now the British GT driving standards adviser, Vergers went on to win the Rockingham-based ASCAR stock car series in 2005 and took the 2006 Le Mans Series LMP2 title.

"If you show yourself once or twice and you get good results, then that does open up a lot of opportunities," he says. "That's something I didn't get out of [the BTCC tests], but I don't have any regrets."

JAMES NEWBOLD



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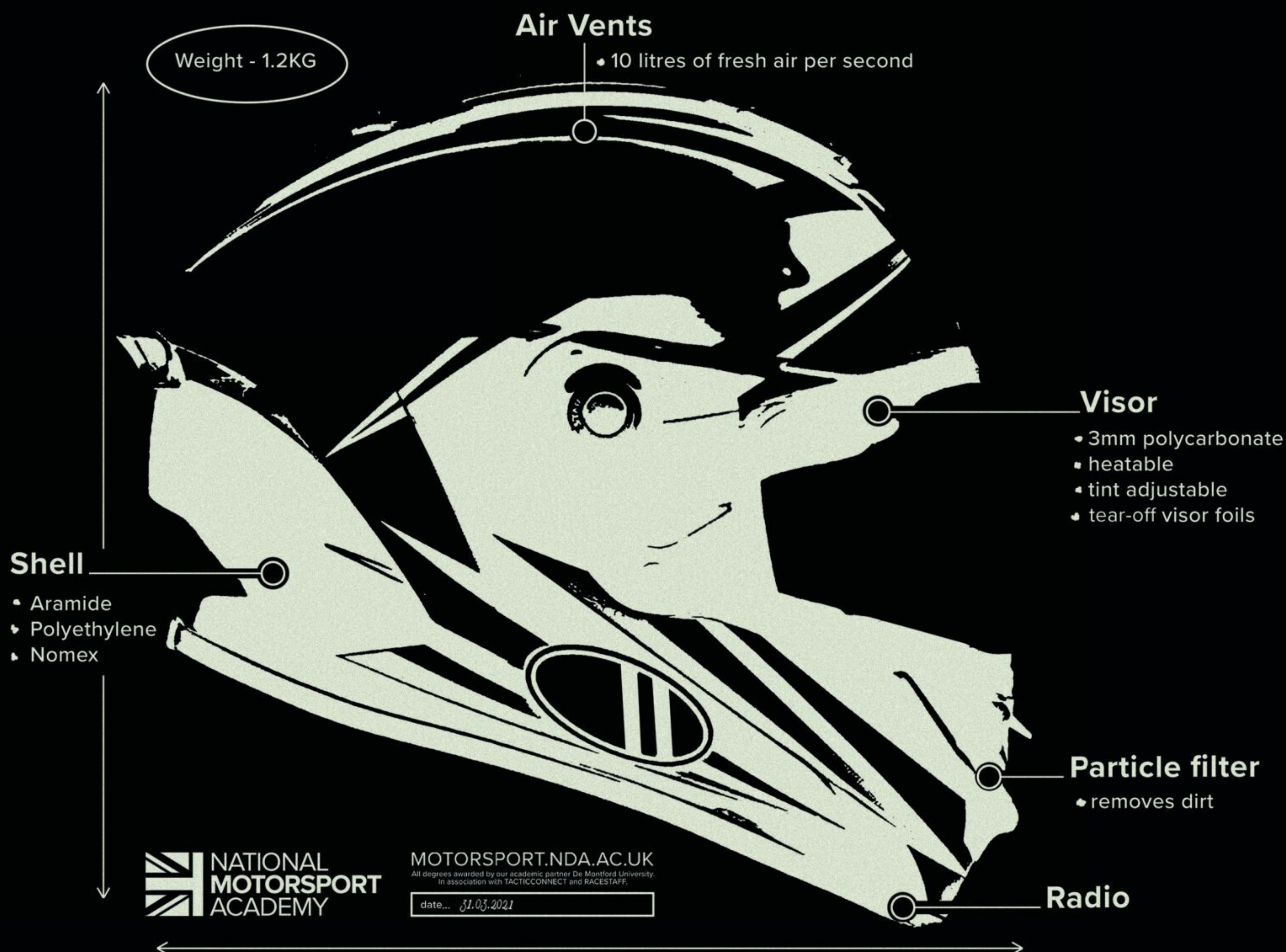
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